

AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

APRIL 8, 1939

WHO'S WHO

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY, of Fordham University, New York, editor of the semi-monthly magazine, *Spain*, as well as associate editor of *Spirit*, the magazine of the Catholic Poetry Society, concentrated his special attention on the Spanish Civil War. He visited Spain and studied the nation from the viewpoint of what Spain would become, after the war. His present article, written when the fall of Madrid and Valencia was imminent, is an authoritative statement. . . . JOHN LAFARGE, having traveled Europe for the purpose of getting a better understanding of inter-European problems, seems to reduce the solution to this: civilize and stabilize Russia, and Europe will settle down to peace. Perhaps we have oversimplified our analysis of his article; but Soviet Russia, nevertheless, is the first nut to crack. . . . GERARD DONNELLY has closely followed the varied proposals to keep us out of war, through neutrality legislation. For the past few weeks, he has been asking himself, and the other editors, questions. He offers answers to some of these questions, and meanwhile watches what the Senate is saying. . . . JOHN C. COYNE worked as a pharmacist, studied for a time at Maryknoll, New York, with a view to laboring on the foreign missions, has written articles for periodicals of various sorts, and is at present most interested in the works of Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Bellarmine, and their influence on western civilization. . . . CORNELIA CRAIGIE has appeared before with her charming travel sketches. . . . OUR POETS, we judge, are known, except John J. Walsh, a seminarian of the Middle West, and Patrick Mary Plunkett, with the same aspirations in Canada.

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COMMENT

SEÑOR de los Rios is an ambassador without a government. The story is weird. President Azaña resigned his office. His constitutional successor, the chairman of the Cortes, resigned. No new election was held, and, according to the Spanish Constitution, the Government ceased to exist. Negrín was forced to resign when the Madrid Defense Committee rebelled against the Negrín junta and took over the government of Loyalist Spain. Señor de los Rios, the Spanish Ambassador representing Azaña and Negrín, cabled his allegiance to the Rebel Madrid Defense Committee headed by the Rebel General Miaja. He was confirmed in his post at Washington as the representative of the Madrid Rebels. He presented his new credentials to the State Department, so we are informed, and was accepted as the legitimate representative of Spain in the United States. Here we pause and question. The United States Government, actually, recognized as the legitimate government of Spain a second rebel junta, engaged in smashing a third Communist rebellion against itself, and preparing to surrender to the so-called first rebels under General Franco. By confirming Señor de los Rios as Ambassador of Spain within twenty-four hours, the United States Government created a record of achievement in the field of recognitions of new Governments. On March 28, in Washington, the early afternoon papers carried the announcement that General Franco captured Madrid and that all Spain was prepared to give allegiance to his Government. On that same day, Señor de los Rios conferred with President Roosevelt. After the interview, he calmly stated "he would remain at his post here for the present, despite the surrender of Madrid." Presumably, with the approbation of President Roosevelt. Certainly, not with the approbation of the only remaining Government in Spain. And so, there is the comic spectacle of an ambassador from a foreign nation that has neither a constitutional nor an actual existence, not even a posthumous ghost. We trust that the State Department in Washington will have cleared away this absurdity before these lines reach the eyes of our readers.

ACCORDING to the Most Rev. John F. Noll, D.D., Bishop of Fort Wayne, a principal secret of the success that has so far attended his vigorous leadership in the nation-wide campaign against indecent and obscene literature, has been his prompt enlistment of the non-Catholic leaders in the very outset of the campaign. Another secret has been the reference of specific violations of moral standards to a detailed yet simple and practical code, similar to the well-known code employed for the motion pictures by the Legion of Decency. The em-

ployment of the code obviates the uncertainty that attended the use of epithets—with corresponding subjection to litigation. It has also an educative effect, since it shows clearly to the public just what decent people do demand, and destroys the notion that they are merely sensitive persons becoming "shocked." The code idea is fruitful, and will doubtless extend to other applications of Catholic moral standards to public affairs.

DOUBTS have been expressed as to how parades on American Avenues do Stop Hitler. Some wonder if the parades even slow him down. Some go so far as to believe that they step him up. Be that as it may, the Stop-Hitler process will not get far as long as the door is left wide open to conditions which make Hitler possible: the indifference of the Christian and civilized world to the spiritual situation of Russia. The question is not whether much or little can be done about it. The question is whether anything is being left undone which can possibly be done. In this week's issue certain aspects of this situation are spoken of, as they affect Central Europe. There are many other aspects; and the time is growing short. No "Hitler" policy can be formulated unless a "Russia" policy is to accompany it.

OBSERVED a very kindly gentleman of "neutral persuasions" to us recently: "It looks as though Franco were going to win out in Spain, doesn't it?" We agreed that it did. "Oh, but what a price to pay for democracy!" "What's sacred about democracy?" we rejoined, rather blankly. "Look here, mister," said the kindly gentleman,—and when even a kindly gentleman, who has been calling you "Father" begins to call you "Mister," you know there is going to be an especial emphasis, even sting, in his observation—"Look here, mister, if it weren't for democracy you wouldn't be preaching the Gospel in the United States of America at the present time. That's how sacred it is!" "But," we objected, "if what you call democracy had its way, I wouldn't be allowed to preach the Gospel in Spain, either. In fact, I should be butchered for trying to preach it." "And so—" he began again, but we continued for him; "And so," we said, "I do not believe in just 'democracy.' I want democracy defined. I believe very much in the democracy of the United States of America, a clearly defined statement of what the word means, in terms of a constitution, a body of principles, and a manner for legislating, judging and executing them. But simply to throw the word 'democracy' around loosely, and apply it to any form of government which isn't 'Fascist' is not particularly impressive

to me. And, therefore, I repeat: What is so sacred about the *word* democracy to say that the meaning of it can wholly vanish and still retain for it defenders brandishing their anathemas, stampeding with their bad manners, and holding their frenzied parades?"

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SPLENDID work that the A.C.T.U., Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, has been doing for the past few months at St. Mark's Labor School in Harlem, suffered a severe blow when on March 24 there died suddenly of a heart ailment twenty-nine-year-old Robert C. W. Smith, labor writer and lecturer. With unparalleled ability and enthusiasm Mr. Smith had devoted himself to expounding the Catholic philosophy of labor relations to a diligent group of some twenty or thirty Negro trades unionists and to lecturing to them on labor tactics. Himself a university man and a skilled debater, he was convinced that he had chosen a particularly fruitful field of Catholic Action. Associated with him have been a young Negro Catholic and convert, Harold A. Stevens, graduate of Boston College Law School and Vice-President of the Catholic Laymen's Union, and others who paid tribute to the rapidity with which Mr. Smith overcame the suspicions of a group who have been exploited with equal readiness by Right and Left alike. The Hall of Fame will soon have to dig out some new niches for heroes of Catholic Action. The field is wide open; and when the brave pass on, Christ's cause calls for fresh combatants to step into the ranks and take their places.

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JUDGING from the amount of trash that clutters the Book Review editor's bookcase, the article on the current mode of reforming God, which appears on page 630 in this issue, is not so silly as at first thought one or other might suppose. Absurd conceptions of God and religious things have been prevalent enough in all ages, but heretofore the rattled-brained muddlings of religious reformers seldom found their way into print. It took the enlightened twentieth century to discover the sales value of opinions offered by persons totally unqualified to speak. Publishers' blurbs blatantly announce new findings about puzzling theological matters from the dazzled brains of a truck gardener who, because he has chanced upon a better turnip, thinks he is qualified to remodel Divine Providence. As is to be supposed, there is not a new idea in the whole output; not a single concept that has not been laid low centuries ago by the irrefutable logic of the Fathers of the Church. It is pure pantheism, materialism or rank paganism rehashed. Sometimes the writer assumes the robes of East Indian mysticism. The more fantastic the mouthings and the more unqualified the author, the better chance the book has with some publishers. Thinking people are not in the least affected by these ravings, but the sad part of it all is that it is driving the unthinking mass into a state of religious indifferentism and a total disbelief in God.

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MOST amusing would be the present attitude of many American newspapers on the question of Spain, if it were not dishonest. Everybody loves a winner, and now that the Nationalists have won the war, even our press is doing its level best to climb on the band wagon, though it is confronted with the task of trying to save its face. The obstacle that stands in the way is the consistently hostile attitude toward Franco assumed throughout the war. How to back down gracefully is causing wrinkles in editorial brows. The result is a compromise. While lauding Franco for his achievement and recording more and more the vile part played by International Communism in provoking and prolonging the war, growing concern is evidenced by these writers for the Spain of the future. While discounting Italian influence, the "ever-increasing German control" has become their pet theme, despite the repeated emphatic pronouncements of Franco that the future Spain will be Spanish, free from all foreign domination. While expressing sympathy for suffering Spain and hopes for her future, their hostile attitude toward her idolized leader, Franco, has not altered. The plain facts do not warrant the present assumption of the American press. The United States needs the friendship of new Spain, and the sooner the press gives over theorizing, sends unbiased observers to secure the facts, and prints them, the better it will be for our relations both in Spain and Latin America.

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STALIN and Hitler bid fair to be remembered in history as the two most unimaginative men in Europe. Of the two Stalin has less imagination than Hitler. But of the two it is hard to say which is preferable: the man with no imagination or the man with little. Judged by standards of just efficiency, Stalin's method of handling his adversaries seems the more convincing. If a man opposes Stalin, he is shot. If a man opposes Hitler, he is put in a concentration camp. The Russian method is simple, expeditious, economical. The German method is simple, expeditious, but not economical. The Russian method is very Russian; take away the man's life. The German method is very German; take away the man's reason. The Russian method is that of the sickle; take off the man's head. The German method is that of the swastika: twist his head out of shape. The Russian method is that of blood: the color of the Soviet flag. The German method is that of bile: the color of the storm-troop shirt. The Russian method is that of swift destruction. The German method is that of slow decay. The Russian and the German nightmares will only cease when enough Russians have been massacred, and enough Germans have gone mad. Russia will then be a land of no revenues. Germany a land of all expenses. Russia will cave in at the stomach. Germany will explode at the stomach. When Stalin and Hitler are moulding in their graves, historians will be able to weigh the present Russian and German frenzies on the balance of impartial judgment, with a special chapter devoted to the topic: which was the greater lunatic?

YOU FEAR ABOUT FRANCO? CONSIDER SOME OF THE FACTS

He will keep Spain free, both within and without

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY

WILL Spain join the Rome-Berlin axis? If she does, will the alliance with the totalitarian states be aggressively military, purely defensive or merely nominal? Will Spain enter an economic union with Germany and Italy? Will she attempt political or economic penetration of South and Central America? Will she support Germany's hitherto unopposed march to the east? Will Spain be Fascist or merely authoritarian like Portugal? These are only a few of the many questions arising as a consequence of Franco's victory in Spain.

Of course no one can really answer them. Many newspaper readers try to. Extremists of the Right and the Left, who always have brown or red specks before their eyes, say that they know the answers. So do the pink ladies and the Colonel Blimps as well as journalists with the usual high official sources at their elbows and politicians in search of votes. In these hectic days of crises and rumors of wars it is not difficult to sell emotional attitudes as facts and to generate through the newspaper the radio and the films a state of mind in which the mere mention of a word or the display of a symbol evokes fanatical hatred or fanatical devotion. Even our statesmen have been snarling and hissing across the Atlantic in the interest of peace.

Under these circumstances, the best that an intelligent man can do is to speculate on the basis of his knowledge. "Truth," says Tacitus "is established by hesitation and delay; falsehood prospers by precipitancy." We have to wait for the truth. Now we can only guess, and since we are guessing about Spain it would be wise to know something about Nationalist Spain.

Now there are two results of the Spanish Civil War, the external and the internal. Both are equally important. The first affects America and the world immediately, and naturally engages our attention; the second concerns the future of Spain and affects us remotely but perhaps more profoundly. We are legitimately interested in what Spain will do today and tomorrow, but we should be even more concerned with Spain's ultimate policy. She is the mother country of our South American neighbors. Their blood is largely her blood, their language hers and their philosophy of life hers also. If the new state of Generalissimo Franco is

successful, it is very likely that all our conferences and economic blandishments will come to nothing and what we inaccurately call Latin America may truly become Spanish America.

Spain, moreover, exerts considerable influence over her sister state, Portugal, and indirectly over the Portuguese Empire, and she is not without her admirers among many Frenchmen who have long been dissatisfied with the parliamentary vaudeville in their own country. We cannot avoid the fact that Spain's future foreign policy will very largely depend upon the internal structure of the new state. It is sheer myopia to judge the foreign policy of the new Spain without studying the intentions and the premises of the proposed national syndicalist state.

It is not necessary, however, to analyze the internal politics of Spain in order to see certain fallacious assumptions regarding Spain's immediate conduct towards her European neighbors. Take for instance the question of the "alliance" with Germany and Italy. What are the facts (not the commentaries or the prophecies)? These facts are few but revealing. We know only that Franco has thanked Germany and Italy for their early recognition and aid. It is interesting to note that he has always been much more cordial in his attitude to Portugal, a truer and less acquisitive friend than Germany and Italy. The Portuguese ambassador, not the German and the Italian ambassadors, is the man whose ideas are most respected by the all-important ministry of organization in Santander. On many important occasions, the most recent one being his New Year's day speech, Generalissimo Franco has singled out Portugal for special praise.

What else do we know? We know that Franco has continuously maintained the absolute independence of Spain. If he is lying, he knows that he must face a proud and vengeful people who have vowed death to the leader who yields an inch of soil or compromises their national honor. But his actions have not belied his words. During the Czechoslovak crisis last fall General Franco issued an unequivocal declaration of neutrality. When it was rumored in February of this year that France and England were about to recognize the Burgos regime, the controlled German and Italian press betrayed the

anxiety of the official world of those countries. They feared that Franco would turn towards London and Paris. He did not, but he could have and they knew it. Berlin and Rome are aware that Spain, with her great mineral and agricultural wealth and her excellent army, will eventually hold the balance of power in Europe.

One cannot deny that the prevailing sentiment in Spain at the present moment favors friendship with Germany and Italy rather than with England and France. There are forty-seven thousand international brigaders in Franco concentration camps. Many of these men are Frenchmen. At least there were the twenty-five thousand who failed to answer mobilization orders during the Czech crisis; because their presence there was the excuse which Marty, the French Communist, offered to the Chamber of Deputies when the Government was about to prosecute them. That memory is now green with the Spaniards, but it may wither in time. Potentially dangerous though this feeling may be, still there is no warrant for asserting that Spain's friendship for Germany and Italy is a permanent alliance.

Attempts have been made to represent Franco as the puppet of his fellow dictators. Among left-wing circles in France there was much agitated clamor about a third frontier until a French military commission inspected adjacent Spanish territory. The commission found that the German fortifications and air bases were parliamentary fantasies almost as ludicrous as the not too remote Terranian episode, during which nightmare some sixty representatives of the Popular Front parties signed a ringing manifesto in support of a non-existent democracy.

Another fact, rarely stressed by those who emphasize excitement, is that Spain cannot afford even to risk the possibility of another war in the near future. She has lost over a million souls. Several million more are war invalids or victims of malnutrition or disease. Many of her cities are in ruins; her industry is badly damaged, her gold reserve squandered; her social system in the process of transformation; and even her able-bodied men are so utterly weary from a long and bitter struggle that only the greatest national emergency could tempt them to take up arms. No one except the professional war-monger sees Spain as a positive threat to the peace of the world.

To force Spain into such a military alliance would create a bitterly hostile Spain, the prevention of which was the *raison d'être* of German and Italian participation. Since the imaginary war is presumably to be fought against France and England, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a Spanish appeal to those countries for aid would be quickly granted. Courted by the old and new imperialisms alike, Spain seems to be guaranteed liberty of action.

H. L. Mencken in an article entitled *The Truth About Spain* in the *Baltimore Sun* (January 22, 1939) comments on this point:

We have been hearing for two and a half years from the same quacks who lately besieged Congress

that Franco is only the agent of Mussolini and Hitler, and that his army is only a rabble of mercenaries. All this is hooey. Franco is no more an agent of Mussolini and Hitler than Washington was an agent of Louis XVI. . . . If he takes whatever help he can from the non-democratic Italians, then Washington took whatever help he could get from the still less democratic French.

Mr. Mencken is not alone in this opinion. The French and British Governments, informed by their armies of trained civil servants, think much the same way. Ogden Hammond and Irwin Laughlin, former United States Ambassadors to Spain, share the same view. Certainly, the military men of the countries most affected do not look upon Franco as the ally of Hitler and Mussolini. General Duval, who was dispatched as an observer to the Spanish Civil War by the Chief of Staff Weygand, wrote in his recently published history of the war (there is a laudatory introduction by Weygand) that Spain would play an important part in European affairs "leagued with neither Germany, France, Italy nor Great Britain, but cultivating friendly relations with all, while it dedicates its energies to the rehabilitation of its war-torn land."

It seems clear that Franco's victory will not in itself help to cause war in the next few years. I believe that there is even less cause for worry in the future. Spain suffers none of the internal pressures which lead to the war of conquest. While Germany and Italy lack many necessary minerals, Spain has a surplus of copper, iron, pyrites, lead and quicksilver; while Germany cannot feed her 75,000,000 and Italy must struggle to provide for her 40,000,000, Spain not only can supply 22,000,000 but, with the development of irrigation and scientific farming, she is potentially a granary of Europe. An importer of manufactured goods she is a possible customer rather than a competitor of Britain, France and the United States. Germany and Italy swarm with their excess population while Spain could maintain more than twice the number she now possesses. Spain neither wants nor needs colonies, raw materials or food. What she wants and what she needs is a century of peace, relief from the civil turmoil which has been incessant since the Napoleonic invasion. Given a moderate respite Spain must gradually become one of the have's rather than one of the have-nots.

Has Franco's victory advanced the cause of Fascism? The answer depends upon the definition of Fascism. A public high-school teacher speaking at a convention in New York last year said that the teaching of Latin and Greek was Fascism. An anarchist friend of mine maintains that all university librarians are arch-Fascists. President Vargas' suppression of Nazism and Communism in Brazil was called Fascism. For some people Fascism includes all persons and ideas not approved by the Communist party. But Franco's victory is not so much an advance of Fascism as it is a defeat of Communism. Only by admitting the Fascist-Communist dilemma can one interpret the Nationalist success as an extension of German-Italian hegemony in Europe.

The real issue is not whether Spain will be authoritarian—it is whether she will be racist and

expansionist, whether new Spain will worship the old idol of the state. What the world fears in Germany and to a lesser extent in Italy is the intentions of those countries to divide the empires of France and England. Since the annexation of Czecho-Slovakia it has become perfectly clear that Germany is not only an aggressor but may be a brutal aggressor as well. But the Spaniard is neither a racist nor a potential invader. Celt-Iberian, Roman, Goth and Moor have combined to make up his racial strain and nature has given him a country which he can exploit for a century.

All this fails to take into account the essential difference between the Spanish state and the German-Italian state. Nationalist Spain is unequivocally Catholic and very likely will remain so. There is not a single Franco minister who has not vigorously seconded the Generalissimo's words in this respect. What is more, the totalitarianism envisaged for National Syndicalism is purely instrumental in character—the state neither claims nor infers that it is or can be the end of its citizens. On the contrary, the rights of the individual and of the family have a recognized priority over the rights of the state. In abandoning the parliamentary method, new Spain has merely turned its back upon a system which in Spain, at least, has been the breeding ground of political corruption, separatism and anarchy. But her corporatism, based upon century-old guild traditions, has its own kind of democracy and its very real virtues.

Franco's mind is the mind of Dollfuss and Salazar, but his protection is not only the pen and the microphone but the swords of over a million of the best troops in the world. There seems to be no valid reason for believing that Spain under Franco will not remain an independent and neutral force in European politics.

REFORM OF GOD

JOHN COYNE



THERE is, today, an itch for theological reform afflicting some of the non-Christian intelligentsia. Particularly is there an "open season" on God. The "reform" of God is now taken up by university professors, psychologists, religious racketeers, and—the Lord between us and all harm!—by politicians. It is assumed that "experts" in every field, except that of theology proper, have not only the right but the sacred duty to publicize their private systems of theology, no matter how absurd.

To the amateur theologians, God is not quite satisfactory. It seems that He is not up-to-date. Possibly, because He has no date to be up to. But anyway, He needs improvement. Six hundred years ago, the angelic Aquinas laid it down that God is the Most Perfect Being that can be thought of. But for the modern amateurs in theology, God seems to be the least perfect being that can be thought of

—judging by the number of improvements they want to wish on Him. The God of Christianity, even the God of Aristotle no longer will serve for us moderns. Thus speak the amateurs. Why? Because we have "evolved."

To date, however, the Supreme Being has been the object of reform on the part of only a few types, for example, of scientists, university professors, novelists and an occasional movie actress. But should we not be more democratic? For, if being a specialist or an expert renders a man or woman capable of discussing with ease profound theological questions, why restrict this right of discussion to so few?

Worried by this injustice to the humbler fields of human endeavor, I interviewed my Sunday Editor, and suggested that the sphere of amateur theological research be somewhat widened so as to include in an Amateur Hour of Theology persons particularly skilled in common trades and professions. It would be nice, thought I, to interview such specialists, and to get their ideas about God and the universe in line with modern developments and improvements in their respective fields. The Editor liked the idea.

Thus it was that, as a beginning, I found myself drawn inevitably to that famous specialist in modern bartending, the well-known Cyrus Q. Soakem whose researches, as everybody knows, have revolutionized bartending and whose discoveries have given humanity a new concept of the significance of mixed drinks.

The great specialist was in his private cocktail bar engaged in an important experiment but, with the simplicity of genius, he abandoned it immediately.

"What, Dr. Soakem," I asked, "is your concept of God in the light of your recent discoveries in bartending? Have your investigations in the realm of mixed drinks had any repercussions on the traditional theologies?"

Absently, the great Specialist sipped a Pink Lady.

"The traditional theologies," said he with a gentle smile, "held for the concept of a Deity intrinsically perfect, the perfection of simplicity but a perfection, if I may say so, rather static, a perfection without *pep*. But in the light of our recent discoveries in bartending, this attitude of mind can no longer be acceptable. With the development of a scientific mixing technique among bartenders, it was gradually seen that the concept of divinity must present implications formerly ignored. Unmixture did not necessarily imply imperfection. The perfection of Deity, therefore, did not consist in unmixture or simplicity, but in mixture."

He sighed. "Need I call your attention to the fact that such a concept of Deity is yet violently disputed by the reactionary and obscurantist elements. Many bartenders have not yet overcome that fear of persecution by powerful ecclesiastical interests which has haunted them down through the ages. In the heyday of ecclesiastical domination, bartending if not absolutely proscribed, was certainly suspect, and amongst the superstitious and ignorant masses

controlled by the clergy, was even regarded as a species of the black art. But with the dawn of modern scientific freedom, a few brave minds among bartenders dared to challenge the traditional interpretation of the universe."

"It is my hope," he said earnestly, "that coincident with the progress of bartending, there may arise among the masses a more scientific concept of Deity. From bartending and bartending alone can such progress be expected."

The search for a more modern God brought me next to an interview with Miss Velma Velome, meteoric star of the Burlesque. Miss Velome, it will be recollect, first attracted public notice when she was expelled from college for posing for a photo in a bathtub. The publicity accruing gained her a part in a burlesque fantasia. Soon afterwards she published her famous book, *Why Not Try Burlesque*, a treatise on erotic mysticism which ran into ten editions.

"I can guess what you came to see me about," she said with one of her dazzling smiles. "About my book. So many people have talked to me about it. They seem to think I have talent for theology. Have I?"

"Such a masterful exponent of the strip-tease art," I urged, "must be eminently qualified to discuss the more abstruse aspects of theology. For, as you are aware, it is axiomatic today in our enlightened civilization that specialists and experts in every field, except that of theology, not only have the right but the sacred duty to give to the world their views upon religion and theology."

"I'm so glad you think so," she murmured gratefully. "I really have a *teeny-weeny* idea that I know something about theology but, of course, one needs a little encouragement. What was it you wished to ask me?"

"What, Miss Velome, is your concept of God and the universe in the light of the rapid developments and discoveries in modern burlesque?"

The petite Sugar-Baby gently removed her pet rattlesnake from about her neck. "It was axiomatic in the scheme of the universe, as conceived by the traditional theologies," she observed, "that burlesque should have been frowned upon. In medieval times when the world was in the throes of ecclesiastical domination, burlesque was an outlawed science. Its devotees were abominably persecuted. Many died the deaths of martyrs."

"If you ask me," she went on, "my concept of religion in the light of recent discoveries in burlesque, I should say that, in substance, it agrees with that elaborated by my friend and confidant, Professor Wilbur Darnmey Whatasnozzle. As you are aware, Professor Whatasnozzle has concluded from his researches in the psychology of religious experience that religion, as such, must be sought primarily in the depths of the sexual experience. Religious life is deepened and glorified by sex. This, of course, was something which the medieval theologians, obsessed as they were with their anti-social concepts of chastity and celibacy could not be expected to understand. Hence, we find their theologies full of taboos."

"In the light of the lessons taught us by modern burlesque we cannot avail ourselves of the older theological ideologies. The notion of God as a creator of taboos, as a censor of private morals can no longer be countenanced. Rather must the idea of God present itself to us under the view of a synchronized collective projection of our desires and needs which we concretize and worship in the expression and pursuit of those factors which contribute to a maximum sense of well-being in our emotional life. In achieving these we achieve Deity. And from burlesques, and burlesques alone," she said earnestly, "can we obtain the guidance necessary for the fulfilment of such an ideal."

At this point, the maid entered and handed the Baby a card. She glanced at it.

"It's Benny," she told me. "You know, Benny Shekelmann, my manager. Say . . . ! Why don't you talk to Benny about theology? After all, he's an expert too."

"That's an idea." I admitted.

Benny buzzed into the room. The Baby kissed the top of his bald head affectionately. She introduced me. "He wants to talk to you about theology, Benny darling."

"Theology? Oh—sure, sure! Have a cigar, Mister. Now, what can I do for you?"

"Mr. Shekelmann," I said, "your achievements in the field of burlesque are well known. As a specialist in the business end of burlesque you must undoubtedly be eminently qualified to discuss theology. In brief, Mr. Shekelmann, what do you think of God?"

"So! You want to know what I think about God? Well, I'll tell you, Mister. I'm in business, see? And I worked hard to get in business for myself. Always in business, you gotta figure how much you can make. See what I mean? You give me a proposition. What I gotta figure is: how much is it worth? What can I make out of it? Well, it's the same way with God. God's alright," he said tolerantly. "I ain't got nothing against God. But what can I get out of Him? Is God good for my business? If He is, okay, fine and dandy. If He ain't, He ain't no good for me."

"In other words, Mr. Shekelmann, you are a pragmatist?"

"Well, I don't know," said Benny cautiously. "What's that?"

I explained: "Many of our sociologists and university professors demand of God that He shall have value for them in term of human experience."

Approvingly Benny nodded. "Fine and dandy. That's good business. That's the way I feel about it, too."

I rose and shook hands with the Sugar-Baby, and her diminutive manager. And as I bade farewell to the two brilliant figures in the world of burlesque, I could not help thinking with emotion of the age that had generated them—an age of liberty and democracy, an age of tolerance, so tolerant that it encourages even bartenders, fan-dancers and burlesque promoters to make God over in their own image, and to give to an admiring world their ideas of the Divine.

THE CZECHS AND SLOVAKS WILL REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM

It awaits Central Europe when a great task is done

JOHN LAFARGE, S.J.



ON May 22 of last year, immediately after the first war scare, President Benes appealed to the citizens of Czechoslovakia not to lose their heads. They were to keep their composure even under the most severe provocation. Courage, unity, calm would see them through the crisis. Above all, they should indulge in no provocative acts.

But calm and courage meant nothing against growing forces of Henlein within and Hitler without. The Republic of Benes departed, never to return, at least in any such form as has existed up to now. Never again, we can presume, will such voting lists be presented to the populace as were seen on that same day, when some fifty or sixty candidates were distributed among numberless parties. Whatever may rise out of the ashes of the dismembered Republic can never be a centralized, socialistic state such as we were familiar with.

When Hitler absorbed Czechoslovakia he found ready at hand a country whose power of resistance was weakened by the very policies which had given it enormous prestige with the Western nations when they were all-powerful after the World War. Since the Czechs were allotted, despite the famous Pittsburgh agreement, the dominant share over the Slovaks and other peoples in the Republic's partnership, the Republic's policies were Czech policies; the Republic's fate was the Czech fate. It stood or fell together with the strength and weakness of the Czech people.

In their present silent battle with the invading Nazi forces, the Czechs have in their favor certain powerful characteristics. Like the Slovaks, like all the Slavic peoples, the Czechs are profoundly agrarian. The Slavs from their first emergence in history have been tillers of the soil, lovers of the soil. Even in emigrating to the United States, the Czechs have kept their love for the land. It is estimated at the present moment that fifty per cent of the people of Czech descent living in the United States are farmers. Czech or Bohemian farm youth in the Middle Western States is more inclined to remain on the land than the people of other national groups. In the "old country," the Czechs and Slovaks alike rapidly assimilated progressive farming methods and moved to a high standard of rural living. Household goods that I saw stored for retail

distribution in cooperative Government warehouses near Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, were as varied and attractive as any you would see in a first-class general merchandise store in rural Iowa or Pennsylvania.

Czech agrarianism's peculiar strength lies in its union with a well-defined middle class. The existence of this middle class enabled the Republic to unite agriculture with industry. It made the Czech manner of living intelligible for Americans, who are predominantly a middle-class people. It gave a certain historic foundation to the desire for a democratic rather than a patriarchal or feudal type of government.

Combined with this well-knit social basis is the familiar tenacity and aggressiveness of the Czech character; pragmatic rather than romantic, with the virtues and faults attaching to such traits. This aggressiveness was developed by centuries of resistance to the Germans. Like the Spaniards, the Czechs developed toughness through long centuries of resistance. They developed strongly marked personalities. Resisting Germans became second nature; and this trait will continue to trouble Nazidom, however much Prague may be plastered with swastikas.

The unity and moral integrity of the Czech people, as a nation, were grievously impaired, however, by three profound mistakes in their history which left them disunited and confused in these critical moments when supreme unity was in demand.

The first mistake, the starting point of all the others, was the wrong interpretation given to the nation's soul by the great Czech historians of the nineteenth century, which later reflected itself in national policies. This interpretation turned the nation's resistance to German and imperial influence into a warfare against the Catholic Church. It led to forgetfulness of the older and truly Catholic origins of the Czech nation. This Czech patriotism was given an anti-Catholic twist, out of which came inevitably an extreme and intolerant nationalism.

The second mistake was the absorption from Western Europe of Socialism, something foreign to Czech ancestry and genuine Czech temperament. The vicissitudes of European Socialism, from its

first stages as an expression of social discontent and of aspirations for social reform to its later stages in Messianic Communism, were reflected in Bohemian thought and policy. They were imported into the United States to be widely diffused among the Czech immigrants. The absorption of Socialism turned anti-Catholicism into the deeper current of anti-religion and allowed an historically Catholic country to harbor a center of world anti-religious propaganda. Particularly unfortunate in Czechoslovakia was the identification of Socialism with agrarian interests and the cultural and economic organization of the rural districts.

Socialism accomplished in Czechoslovakia what Socialism is destined to accomplish, under one form or another, in rural America, unless, by some miracle, American Catholics as a body wake up to the fact that the Church's future in this country rests ultimately upon the land.

The third and most fatal mistake was to turn to Soviet Russia for salvation; to a regime which within its own confines was the negation of democracy, which was plotting the destruction of democracy within the limits of the Czechoslovak Republic. Scant as were the practical advantages, the association brought with it the evil odor and the moral compromise that attaches to all connivance with a professedly atheistic regime.

To argue, however, that the Czechs as rulers of the Republic made these fatal mistakes, gives us no right to argue that Czechoslovakia needed to be wiped off the map. The current statement that Czechoslovakia, as a country, was an "inner contradiction," a "national absurdity," since it contained within its confines various national groups is the sort of statement easily passed off, but which, if logically followed out, would condemn a good part of the existing governments of the world, including our own. Hitler, in his Vienna youth, was horrified at the multitude of peoples who were assembled under the standards of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its old reason for existence, defense of Europe against the Turks, had long since perished. Yet time is now showing that the old Empire, with all its creaking and groaning, was not such a crazy vehicle as the world was led to believe.

How can any government or any nation exist in Central Europe except as a result of compromise and cohabitation between many races and language groups? Boundary lines mean nothing; regions exist where the wisest head cannot determine with precision whether by right or ultimate nationality they are Slovak, Ukrainian, Polish or Hungarian.

The illogical, the false element in the Czechoslovak creation was not the mere political grouping of these various peoples, all of whom till the soil, drink beer, don national costumes and gossip about the next village in substantially the same way. It was an attempt to unite them by means of a fierce, often anti-Catholic, nationalism, coupled with Socialism. The Slovaks had their bitter grievances against Magyar nationalism as they had later against Czech nationalism. They were right in both instances; yet they are naturally friends and associates of Czech and Magyar alike.

Equally significant is the little-heeded fact that the Catholic revival among the Czechs was steadily opening the eyes of the people and of their governmental rulers to the mistaken course they had been following. The first sign of this awakening was the prohibition of the egregious John Hus celebrations that had given such deep offense to Catholics; and the recognition of Czechoslovakia's great Catholic kings and saints as a living part of the nation's tradition. The attempt to manhandle Catholicism as a public institution gave way to long and patient negotiations conducted, with entire fairness on both sides, by Premier, later President, Benes with the Holy See on behalf of a *modus vivendi* or working agreement between Church and State. Great national demonstrations on behalf of Catholic Action were not only tolerated, but received cordial governmental approval. Catholicism began to emerge from the cloud of anti-Austrian politics and was seen to be not only Bohemian, but the historic source of Bohemia's national and cultural greatness. Let us not exaggerate. All wounds were not healed, all mistakes were not rectified. The wintry blasts of Socialism still howled over the Hradcany Palace in Prague and raised a positivist dust in the country's numerous schoolrooms. The Socialist Sokols (youth groups) still lorded it over the Catholic "Eagles." Nevertheless, in an absolute sense, Czech Catholicism made heroic progress. Catholic Action was growing apace. The impression of a traveler in that country in the spring of 1938 was that the "Eagles" would win in due time, and that the logic of events was gradually opening the eyes of Czech officialdom to the folly of a domineering rule in the eastern provinces of the Republic.

Most significant of all, not for the Czechs and Slovaks alone, but for the whole of Europe, was the prominent part in this Catholic revival given to the Saints Cyril and Methodius, apostles of Slavic Christianity, and to the Reunion movement which those Saints symbolize. Significant, because it shows that whatever be their political vicissitudes, the Catholic Slavic peoples are destined to play the principal part in Europe's major task at the present time, the spiritual rebirth of Russia.

Velehrad, Shrine of Cyril and Methodius, in Catholic Moravia, is the religious meeting-ground between East and West.

On the spiritual regeneration of Russia depends the destiny of the Central European nationalities. While Russia remains what it is, neither Hitler nor anti-Hitler can bring order out of the prevailing confusion. The Czechs, the Slovaks, the Poles, the Baltic peoples—and, in a wider sense, the Hungarian and Balkan nations—have all their *spiritual* as well as their political part to play in this great work. Nations find themselves through historic tasks, not through balances of power or schemes of conquest. The people of Central Europe will find in their task that secret of national unity which imperialism, nationalism and revolution have failed to reveal. Czechs and Slovaks, associated yet independent, will recover their national existence as part of that general reconstruction which will follow Russia's social and spiritual regeneration.

A CATECHISM OF OUR NEUTRALITY LAWS

Facts for an understanding of the Committee hearings

GERARD DONNELLY, S.J.



Q: What does our present Neutrality Law say about supplying materials to belligerents?

A: The law makes distinction between two kinds of American merchandise. It separates (1) "arms, ammunition, implements of war" from (2) certain other articles and materials.

Q: Does the Neutrality Act forbid export of arms?

A: Yes—to belligerents. If France and Germany, for example, should begin hostilities, not a single gun, shell, poison-gas container, tank, military plane or war implement of any kind could be moved from American docks—if destined for France or Germany. Munitions makers could continue to ship their goods to neutral nations, but not if meant for later transshipment to a belligerent.

Q: Does this embargo operate automatically—that is, from the moment two nations begin to fight?

A: No. It becomes effective only after a proclamation by the President in which he publicly states that war is going on, announces the belligerents by name. Other proclamations, previous or subsequent, enumerate the munitions and implements to be embargoed.

Q: Is the President compelled to proclaim a state of foreign war?

A: Seemingly the Act leaves him no discretion in the matter, for it decrees that he "shall" issue a proclamation when he "finds" that war is on. But the law cannot compel him to "find" a war, even though everyone else can see newsreels of the fighting or actually hear the guns. The President has never officially found China and Japan at war, and has issued no manifesto about it.

Q: Does the arms embargo apply to civil war, too?

A: Yes; we may not export arms to either side.

Q: What are the materials other-than-arms dealt with in the Neutrality Act?

A: Theoretically *all* other materials—anything and everything which could be shipped from the United States to belligerents. Practically, however, our lawmakers were thinking of articles used in the manufacture of munitions or especially required by a warring nation. Scrap iron, copper, cotton, for example, or oil and wheat and so forth.

Q: Can Americans continue to export these "other-than-arms" commodities, even after a Presidential finding of war abroad?

A: Yes. But the Act empowers the President to issue another proclamation putting serious restriction on any commodities he chooses to enumerate.

Q: What is this restriction?

A: American vessels can no longer lawfully transport the blacklisted articles to belligerents. The law does not really lay an embargo on these goods; it merely forbids American ships to carry them. Our citizens could continue to sell them to belligerents, but only foreign-owned vessels could take them from our shores.

Q: What is the other provision of cash and carry?

A: Another clause empowers the President to proclaim that belligerents must thereafter pay cash for purchases before these can be moved from American ports. Transportation becomes unlawful until the American citizen's right, title and interest in the commodities shall have been transferred to a foreign government or agent.

Q: The President is empowered, but is he bound, to proclaim cash or carry?

A: No. The text of the law says he "shall," but only if, in his judgment, certain circumstances have arisen. Hence a President may think it wiser to close his eyes to these circumstances, and so refuse, with complete legality, to apply cash and carry.

Q: What is the purpose of the cash and carry provisions?

A: Let us look first at the chief purpose of the entire Neutrality Act. It is an effort to prevent a repetition of things which helped to get us into the World War—the destruction by belligerents of American lives, ships and goods on the high seas, and the inflamed feelings of our people over such incidents. That is the reason, not only for cash and carry, but also for other important provisions in the Act.

Q: What are these other provisions?

A: Principally five. (1) A clause to protect lives: once the President has announced the foreign war, no American citizen can lawfully travel on ships belonging to belligerents. (2) A clause to minimize danger of attack: no American vessel engaged in

commerce with belligerents can be armed. (3) Another clause protecting lives and ships: no American vessel can transport munitions from a foreign port to belligerents (an eventuality not forbidden by the arms embargo of Section 1). (4) A clause prohibiting any person in the United States to solicit funds for belligerents, or to make them loans, or deal in their securities. (5) A section empowering the President to keep the armed ships of any foreign nation out of American ports.

Q: All these are measures which Congress hopes will keep us out of trouble with the warring nations?

A: *Hopes* is the right word. Not even a wide application of cash and carry promises more than a hope.

Q: Please explain.

A: Suppose that the President applies cash and carry; suppose that under the carry clause he blacklists ten, twelve, or even twenty classes of commodities. In that event American vessels will still be free to carry goods not therein enumerated. These goods may be wholly unmilitary in nature, but because they are supplies for the enemy, the blockaders will try to stop or destroy them. This means that American carriers may be sunk, and we shall have an ugly incident on our hands.

Q: Perhaps, then, it is only by blacklisting all merchandise without exception—that is, by forbidding American vessels to carry anything whatever to belligerents—that we can avoid such incidents.

A: Perhaps. Especially since this does not mean the stopping of American trade, but only of American shipping.

Q: The cash and carry clauses are soon to expire?

A: Section 2 of the Neutrality Act, the section embodying cash and carry, lapses next May 1. The remainder of the Act, of course, continues in force. Nevertheless substitutes are being proposed in Congress this week, substitutes for cash and carry and also for the entire Neutrality Act.

Q: What about the Pittman Bill?

A: It embodies a serious proposal of change from current legislation, inasmuch as it would abolish the present embargo on munitions. It would drop all present distinction between "arms" and "other materials" and legalize sales of any American merchandise whatsoever.

Q: Belligerents would thus be enabled to buy arms, ammunition, and implements of war from America?

A: Yes. But on the other hand, the bill would remove the application of cash and carry from Executive discretion. Cash and carry would be mandatory, would be imposed automatically by the law, not arbitrarily by the President. Soon after the outbreak of war, the belligerents would be paying cash for all supplies (including munitions), and carrying them away in non-American ships.

Q: Would there be a blacklist of certain articles, keeping them out of American ships?

A: Yes; but it would be the hundred-per-cent blacklist mentioned above, for the Pittman bill

would prohibit American bottoms from carrying anything whatever to belligerents—passengers, munitions, or materials of any kind.

Q: Would the bill permit an Executive conveniently to overlook a war—as Mr. Roosevelt has overlooked the conflict in the Orient?

A: No. It calls for a Presidential proclamation naming the states involved in actual strife. It leaves the Executive no freedom in this matter. On the contrary, it directs him to make a manifesto within thirty days. This thirty-day period, moreover, begins, not at the declaration of war, but at the outbreak of hostilities—an objective fact which he cannot disregard.

A: These provisions comprise the whole of the Pittman Bill?

A: Not at all. The bill (which the Senator wants to call the "Peace Act of 1939") retains all provisions of the present Neutrality Act (with the exception of changes just noted or implied) and adds a new section. Under this section the President could proclaim the existence of certain combat areas at sea. Thereafter no American citizen or ship could lawfully enter this area.

Q: The Pittman bill is not the only proposal to Congress for new neutrality legislation?

A: No. Five other bills will be heard this week by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—the bills proposed, respectively, by Senators Lewis, King, Nye, Thomas and Clark.

Q: What does Senator Lewis want?

A: He believes that neutrality can best be preserved by leaving the Administration untrammeled by laws; only thus will it be free to meet and handle unpredictable emergencies when they arise. Senator Lewis, therefore, wants to repeal all our present neutrality statutes and to enact no substitute at all. Senator King's idea is very similar; but Senator Nye goes to the other extreme.

Q: In what way?

A: He wants to make the present law more mandatory, to mark out the exact path which the President must follow; he wants to prohibit the export of all arms and munitions, not only in times of war but also in times of peace.

Q: And Senator Thomas' plan?

A: An opposite extreme, not welcomed by those who dislike and distrust Mr. Roosevelt. It proposes giving power to the President to name aggressor and victim in any war; then the President would apply embargoes against the aggressor, and encourage the shipment of munitions and supplies to the victim. The Senator hardly calls this neutrality; he calls it a plan to prevent wars. A threatened American discrimination, favoring the victim and against the aggressor, is sure to make the prospective aggressor pause.

Q: What is Senator Clark's plan?

A: His bill resembles Senator Pittman's inasmuch as it makes cash and carry mandatory and then forbids American vessels to transport any goods whatever. On the other hand, it retains the embargo on arms to belligerents, and permits Congress, not only the President, to proclaim the fact of a foreign war.

OUTSTRETCHED HAND

WHAT is the first condition required of a Communist before a Catholic can accept his "outstretched hand?"

An answer to this question is propounded in the picture-weekly *Look*, April 11, by George N. Shuster, for many years managing editor of the *Commonweal*, who discusses *Ten Major Problems the New Pope Faces*. Says Mr. Shuster:

The new Pope faces the problem of what response to make to the Communist offer of an "outstretched hand." In several countries, the Communists have said they would stop attacking the churches and religion. Maurice Thorez, French Communist leader, went to see Pope Pius XI and made this offer in person. If the Communists mean what they say and give evidence of their sincerity, the Church cannot reject them. But can the Pope trust them? And what would the "dictators" say if the "outstretched hand" were rejected?

The question raised by M. Thorez and referred to by Mr. Shuster was the subject of a dramatic correspondence between the late editor of the Communist Paris daily, *L'Humanité*, M. Vaillant-Couturier, and Father Gaston Fessard, French social philosopher, known for many patient and charitable attempts to explore every possibility of a spiritual approach or "dialog" between Communist and Catholic. Father Fessard pointed out that mere assurances of ceasing the attack on churches and religion in no wise met the issue. Such an attack might be suspended anywhere and at any time, as party expediency demanded. But the first condition of such a "dialog" was:

The rejection of systematic atheism. As long as the Communist will not consent at least to call in question his formal negation of God, nothing can keep his words from being infected with a "heretology" which renders impossible all language common with the Catholic or with anyone else.

M. Vaillant-Couturier died without having replied to such a simple challenge. Nor will any other recognized Communist leader do any better.

Until that issue is met, Communism, unwilling to admit the least doubt as to its official atheism, remains under the ban of "intrinsic perversity" placed upon it not by dictators, but by the late Pope Pius XI. As Father Fessard observes: "The most simple social relationship, that of language, even when it seems to point towards union—becomes a cause of disunion." Until that issue is clarified, no language can be "sincere," and talk of "sincerity" remains futile. But Communist leaders stubbornly refuse foothold for any idea that Communism can make such a concession without thereby ceasing to be Communism.

Mr. Shuster expresses fears lest victorious General Franco will "alienate still further" the Spanish people from the Church; lest he will be subject to Hitler and Mussolini. These fears are understandable in one so alive to Nazi trickery, but they rest, we are convinced, upon a misconception of the attitude of the Spanish people toward the Church, and of Franco toward his recent allies. The logic of events should soon reassure Mr. Shuster.

EDITO

TRIUMPH

REJOICING in the complete victory of General Franco and the Nationalist Movement over the malign powers that threatened to kill the soul of the Spanish people, we have confidence that victory means justice, charity and peace for all the people of Spain. We have assurance that General Franco's Government will mold the people into a united whole, not by force, not by violation of individual and social rights, not by fear, but by generous pardon, by education, by equitable legislation and social justice. We have trusted Franco in the war. We trust him, now, in peace.

GUARANTEE

WHEN "drest in a little brief authority," Shakespeare assures us, man can play "fantastic tricks." We do not recall the context at the moment, but it seems to us that the bard must have perceived with prophetic eye many of our officials in this twentieth century. For their tricks are indeed fantastic, and rarely more fantastic than when they affect to sneer at civil liberties, and by their practice strive to make the Bill of Rights a thing of naught. That is why it is reassuring to know that a high official of the Government can protest these sneers, as Attorney General Murphy did last week in a radio address from Washington. Some of us approve civil liberty, said Mr. Murphy, but only when we mean our own civil liberty. That attitude, remarked the Attorney General, endangers our form of government.

Whether or not we believe in the civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States can be easily tested. The test has often been set forth in these pages. Are you willing to fight for all the guarantees enumerated in the Bill of Rights when these are claimed by men whose views you oppose? When the Government steps on our toes, we emit (and should emit) a loud roar of protest. Is our protest equally sincere when the Government steps on the toes of a Communist? We very properly claim the constitutional right to express our sentiments in a speech, or in a moving-picture, or in a newspaper or book. Do we allow the same constitutional right to a member of the Klan? As Mr. Murphy remarks, a good many of

DELAY

RECOGNITION by the United States of the Government of Spain headed by General Francisco Franco has been too long delayed. A spokesman of the Administration states that there are complications, of which we are not aware, that prevent immediate recognition. We fail to discover the nature of these complications and we call upon our Government to state them. We discover very serious complications through our Government's refusal to grant recognition rights. The U. S. and the U. S. S. R., alone of all nations, refuse recognition to Franco. Why?

EE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

us are "tempted to look on civil liberty as a protection only to themselves, and not to those with whom they disagree."

No doubt the exercise of any right guaranteed by the Constitution carries with it grave responsibilities. Both from the moral and the constitutional viewpoint, rights may not be exercised at the expense of the rights of the community. Hence the civil power may impose reasonable restrictions upon their exercise, but not to the point of practically destroying the rights in question. Thus the civil power may and should regulate the use of property, or take it for public purposes, with compensation, even against the will of the owner, or restrict the amount of property which an owner may leave to his heirs. But it may not enforce these regulations in a manner which destroys the natural right to acquire and to hold property. Incidentally, we hope that zealous controversialists will drop their "distinction" between "property rights" and "human rights," as though the two groups were incompatible. As Leo XIII and Pius XI taught, the right to property is among the most important of human rights.

Much of the present fog about civil liberty hangs over the constitutional guarantee of free speech. The alternative to this guarantee is dictatorship, under which all rights, even those which are natural as well as constitutional, will disappear. If wild-eyed agitators were consistently punished when they spurn the strict responsibility which free speech carries with it, much of the fog, we think, would lift.

THE LONGEST CORNER

IF we are to believe certain parties in Washington, authorized to speak for the Administration, recovery is just around the corner. To reach this desired goal, we have but to spend a few more billion dollars, which we do not possess, and the corner will be behind us once and for all. Elusive prosperity has been "just around the corner" for the past eight years, but our trouble is that we cannot seem to make that corner.

With the advent of the Roosevelt Administration a feeling of relief was experienced all over the country. Psychologically, if for no other reason, the change was hailed as the dawn of a better era. The Administration had the backing of every fair-minded person in the country and willingness was expressed to cooperate with every sound economic adventure. Business, and banking especially, needed reform; even some enterprises required the Administration's threatened "big stick" to bring them to time.

The remedy proposed was "pump-priming"; some stimulation to start the engine going after which, we were assured, the machine would operate itself. But now after nearly seven years of this theory, it is high time to pause and view our accomplishment. What has been actually achieved?

It was reported in 1933 that there were from eleven to thirteen million unemployed. Today, from the best estimates at our disposal, the number roughly stands at ten million, and our national indebtedness has more than doubled itself. There is no doubt that the country is financially sounder than it was eight years ago, but how much of this is attributable to the natural uptrend of business that follows an economic depression and how much to the Government's "pump-priming" experiment, is difficult to determine. There can be no gainsaying the fact that the betterment of world finance has reflected largely on our present conditions.

We have given Government-enforced inflation and prodigal spending a fair trial. The means have failed to produce the promised result. We are still turning the corner and recovery is not yet in sight. With six years frenzied effort to round it, it is safe to say that it is the world's longest corner.

The country at large wants a balanced budget. The electorate has given this mandate to the new Congress and judging from Congressional trends, Congress itself is anxious to be about it. The feeling of instability and insecurity in business, its inability to interest investors, are certain indications of the need of other measures. Chairman Eccles of the Federal Reserve System and strong advocate of the Administration's spending policies, openly challenges Congress to attempt any budget-balancing economies at the present moment. He even predicts "disastrous" results as a consequence, though he is willing to admit "a great majority of the people" desire retrenchment and stabilization.

It is apparent that Congress will effect nothing if not backed by the whole-hearted cooperation of the Administration. The responsibility for enact-

ment of Congressional measures rests with the executive branch of our tri-cornered system of American Government. Obstruction on the part of this branch either by inactivity or lack of effective co-operation would inevitably doom any retrenchment measure to failure. Naturally it is hard to admit the failure of one's pet schemes, and it is not hard to understand the Administration's reluctance to scrapping its favored economic theories.

Viewed from whatever angle one chooses, spending oneself rich does not make sense. Even its proponents in the Government admit that the scheme would be fatal for any private business enterprise. With the Government, they assert, it is another matter. Backed by the revenues planned in advance that will be garnered from future taxes, the spend-yourself-rich program is here economically feasible. Such a program may succeed for a short time, and within controlled limits, but with a staggering deficit which is mounting yearly into billions of dollars and with no ultimate term in view other than a time when our hypothetical tax revenue will be mulcted from an undetermined, purely hypothetical gross national income, the scheme is too hazardous to permit of experiment.

Against such further experimentation, it has but to be cited that the balanced-budget plan has worked successfully in England and France, both of which countries have outstripped us in recovering financial stability. No one imagines, as Senator Harrison declared, that a balanced Federal budget can be effected all at once. But an attempt toward this *desideratum*, by allaying uncertainty and suspense, would contribute much to final recovery.

WPA INVESTIGATION

CONGRESS has at last authorized the Appropriations Committee to begin an investigation of the Works Progress Administration. Charges of political activity and, even, interference have been laid at the door of the WPA from time to time, which gained in vehemence in proportion to the proximity of election seasons. The charges, however, have been such as demanded a thorough airing of the conduct of this most expansive relief program.

This Review has advocated such an investigation on more than one occasion. Apart from the truth or falsity of the charges that the WPA "was in politics," the investigation is entirely in accord with our American political system. The expenditures of such vast sums of money, for whatever purpose appropriated, should be strictly accounted for before the people. After all, it is the people's money that is being expended, and they have the right to know that it is being spent wisely.

But whether the investigation returns a verdict of mismanagement or not, is beside the purpose here. The resolution adopted by Congress calls for a report that will enable Congress to formulate policies for future relief appropriations.

The investigation is timely in view of the people's mandate that Congress seek ways and means of balancing the Federal budget.

VICTORY!

IF the sun does not literally dance on Easter morning, as old Christian folklore has it, at least the heart of every Christian must dance with joy on this great day of victory. "Yea, Christ is risen, my hope," the Church sings in the Sequence of the Mass, in words attributed to Mary Magdalen, "and He will go before you into Galilee." Then the chorus rises from all the world of faithful hearts: "We know that Christ indeed has risen from the grave: Hail, thou King of Victory."

Poets sing of "the sweetest story ever told," the love of a man for a maid. Sweet it is (for it is told in the throb of hearts which God has made), but it is not the sweetest. That we find in the Easter Gospel (Saint Mark, xvi, 1-7) wherein we read of those who loved Our Lord so dearly that early in the morning, "very early in the morning," notes Saint Mark, they sought His tomb in the garden. Love here sought love; the love of one who had sinned sought Him against Whom she had sinned; and He Who was sinless gave His Heart in love to a human heart once stained with sin.

It is sweet to serve Our Lord, and the angelic hosts sing a special song of praise for those whose robes have ever been kept white. But as we look upon Magdalen on Easter morning, may we not think that in the presence of Jesus she found a sweetness which He reserves for those who, having lost Him, seek Him again "very early in the morning"? Had she not, braving the sneers of the professionally pious, anointed His Head with precious ointment? Had she not bathed His Feet with her tears, and dried them with the gold of her hair? Had she not stood at the foot of the Cross in those dark hours, keeping love's vigil to the end?

Praise to Jesus, victorious over sin, for His infinite goodness to the sinner! We know that by His death upon the Cross He has conquered sin, made reparation to His Father for the sin of our race, and has opened to all the children of God the gates of Heaven. That is the faith which we know and cherish. But it may be that this morning, we who have sinned will find especial joy in the thought of Our Risen Saviour's love for the sinner. In Him we who have been entombed by sin, can rise gloriously; in Him we who have been slain by sin, shall live forever.

But turning from ourselves, our hearts will go out on Easter morning to all who are in tribulation and who mourn. As these afflicted children of Our Father in Heaven look to the future, they see a tomb that is sealed, and they ask with the Holy Women: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the sepulchre?" May our Risen Saviour impart to these sad hearts a special share of His love, and fill them with new hope! They indeed know that when the time comes, Our Lord will roll away the stone, but fears oppress, and the hours of waiting are long. Be comforted, for "you shall see him, as he told you," and in that blessed vision you shall know peace. Lift up your hearts and be glad, for all who suffer with Him shall be enfolded forever in His love.

CHRONICLE

THE CONGRESS. The revised Government Reorganization Bill was sent to the President for signature. . . . From the Agriculture Department's 1940 supply bill, the House, in a city versus countryside battle, cut \$250,000,000 that was designed for farm price parity payments. . . . Senators Nye, Clark and Bone introduced amendments to the Neutrality Act designed to limit the President's discretion under the law. Declared Senator Capper: "I am strongly opposed to any secret assurances being given to other nations that the United States will back them up in case of war." . . . The House Judiciary Committee reported there was insufficient evidence for the resolution looking to impeachment of Secretary Perkins and two Labor Department aides. The House thereupon tabled the resolution. A Republican minority report declared the Secretary and her two assistants "have been lenient and indulgent to Harry Bridges in the conduct of his deportation case to an unprecedented extent," but that "the record before us lacks proof of any kind as to the motive actuating such leniency and indulgence." The minority report, however, was in general agreement with the Judiciary Committee findings. . . . The House passed unanimously the Dempsey Bill, requiring deportation of aliens advocating any change in the American form of government. . . . The House Appropriations Committee slashed \$50,000,000 from the \$150,000,000 requested by President Roosevelt to finance the WPA until June, approved \$100,000,000. . . . By a vote of 357 to 27, the House ordered an investigation of the WPA. The investigators will examine the employment of funds by the WPA and recommend a relief policy to guide the House in the future.

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THE ADMINISTRATION. The President approved plans for two 45,000-ton battleships. They will be the world's mightiest. . . . Secretary Hopkins reported that the income of all persons in the United States for February, 1939, was \$5,090,000,000, exceeding that of February, 1938, by \$115,000,000. . . . To eliminate "avoidable burdens on American productive enterprise," Secretary Morgenthau proposed modification of the social-security payroll taxes to save more than \$200,000,000 in the next two years to employers and employees. The President supported Mr. Morgenthau's proposal. . . . President Roosevelt conferred at the White House with the Spanish Loyalist Ambassador, Fernando de los Rios, concerning Spanish refugees. . . . Mr. Roosevelt announced the trade agreement made last year with Czecho-Slovakia would be terminated April 22. . . . Since exports from Memel will now be German, the Treasury decreed penalty duties on all goods from that territory. The additional duties are placed on German goods on the

ground that the German Government subsidizes exports. . . . President Roosevelt proposed that the United States Government subsidize exports of cotton to promote the sale of the enormous cotton surplus in world markets.

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AT HOME. The District of Columbia Court of Appeals handed down a decision indicating the "inequality before the law as between an employer and employes" under the National Labor Relations Act, declared an employer has no "legal remedy for protecting" his business against loss in the "struggle of competing unions." . . . In a six to two decision, the Supreme Court ruled the Federal Government may place an income tax on State salaries, that a State may levy on the salaries of Federal employes. . . . The New Jersey Anti-Gangster Law was declared unconstitutional by the high Court because of the vagueness of its terms. . . . The National Association of Manufacturers demanded eight amendments to the Wagner Labor Relations Act. . . . Harry Bridges filed a declaration of intention to become a citizen of the United States. He filed similar papers in 1920, 1928, allowed them to lapse.

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SPAIN. Envoys from the Madrid Defense Council flew to Burgos March 23 to discuss the surrender of the city with Generalissimo Franco. . . . On March 26 the Nationalists launched a far-flung offensive on the Cordoba front in southern Spain, also a push on the Toledo front south of Madrid. . . . Loyalist soldiers began laying down their arms, going over to the Nationalist lines in the University City, suburb of Madrid. . . . The Loyalist fleet, interned in Bizerte, Tunisia, was handed over to the Nationalists. . . . White flags began appearing on the Madrid defense lines. Shortly after noon, March 28, the triumphant soldiers of Generalissimo Franco commenced pouring over the Toledo bridge into Madrid, ending the siege of nearly twenty-nine months. Other divisions marched in from different outskirts. . . . War-wearied, hungry, but jubilant throngs greeted the Nationalist soldiers, shouting: "Arriba España! Viva Franco!" The Loyalist flags came down, the red and gold of Franco fluttered from buildings everywhere. Religious insignia were displayed from balconies. Priests appeared on the streets once more. 18,000 political prisoners of the Loyalists were freed from prisons. 6,500 food trucks followed the Franco troops into the half-starved city, began distributing canned food, chocolate, fruit to the residents, some of whom had been eating cats, rats. . . . That night the lights were turned on in Madrid for the first time since 1936. . . . General Miaja, many of his aids, flew to Algeria. . . .

On March 29, Valencia, Almeria, Murcia, Ciudad Real, Jaen, Cuenca, Albacete, Guadalajara, Alicante, last of the Loyalist-held provincial capitals, surrendered to Franco. The Generalissimo proclaimed the end of the thirty-two-month-old civil war.

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ITALY. Speaking in Rome to cheering throngs on the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the first fascist combat squad, Premier Benito Mussolini declared "a long period of peace necessary to safeguard Europe." The Rome-Berlin axis is not merely a relationship between two States, he asserted, but "a meeting between two revolutions." Recent happenings in Central Europe were bound to occur, he said. . . . Regarding Italian claims on France, Mussolini declared: "These problems have a name. They are called Tunisia, Jibuti and the Suez Canal." Asserting that France was free not to discuss the differences, Mussolini warned the French Government it "cannot complain later if the ditch which now separates the two nations grows so deep that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to fill it." . . . The Mediterranean was vital for Italy, the Premier said, and also the Adriatic. Reference to the Adriatic was interpreted as a hint to Hitler, as Mussolini said Italian interests were preeminent there. . . . The speech was regarded as less hostile to France than anticipated and as holding the door open for negotiation.

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FRANCE. Replying to the address of Premier Mussolini, Edouard Daladier, Premier of France, in a broadcast speech maintained that Italy had never officially made specific requests from France. As to demands made by clamor in Italian streets, he said his Government had already stated its position, that France would not "cede a foot of our land nor our rights." France will not, however, refuse "to examine propositions that may be made to her," he revealed. . . . Returning from London, Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet reported concerning the effort to form a combined front of Britain, France, Soviet Russia and Poland against Hitler. The Soviet suggestion of a conference of interested nations produced no results. Without a binding guarantee of military aid from Britain and France, Poland would join no Stop-Hitler bloc. Such a guarantee might be forthcoming. . . . In 1936 France signed a treaty with Syria granting the latter independence, but later refused to ratify it without amendments. The National Syrian party continued its demands that France change its policy in their land.

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GREAT BRITAIN. Though rejecting demands for compulsory military service, the London Government issued a decree doubling the size of her "citizen" or Territorial Army. By means of voluntary enlistment, the strength of this "national guard" branch of the armed forces will be brought to 500,000 men. . . . In the House of Commons Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain again warned Adolf

Hitler against attempting world domination. . . . En route to Ireland from Rome, the Prime Minister of Ireland, Eamon de Valera, conferred with Mr. Chamberlain. . . . Two time bombs exploded on a bridge over the Thames. The explosion, which seriously damaged the bridge, was believed to be connected with the wave of bombings throughout Britain that was attributed to the outlawed Irish Republican Army, which demands a return of Ulster to Ireland. Eight men were convicted of other bombings, sentenced to long terms in jail. . . . In Palestine, British troops shot and killed Abdul Rahim Haj Mohammed, a leader of the Arab rebellion.

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GERMANY. A trade agreement with Argentina was signed whereby the Reich will exchange locomotives for wheat and wool. . . . In her pact with Slovakia, Germany undertakes to protect the political independence of the Slovak State and the integrity of its territory. German troops have the right to erect military buildings in certain Slovak zones, and the right of military sovereignty within those zones. The Slovaks will have their own military force. . . . Hungarian and Slovakian troops clashed, as Hungary demanded border revisions. Slovak officials inquired from Berlin the Reich attitude toward the dispute. . . . Berlin and Warsaw conferred regarding the status of the Free City of Danzig. . . . The Nazi regime introduced a new financial plan by the issuance of non-interest-bearing tax certificates. These certificates can be used as money up to forty per cent of obligation. Commencing May 1, the Government agencies will pay sixty per cent in cash, forty per cent in certificates. Private businesses may use the certificates up to forty per cent for everything except salaries. . . . To Premier Mussolini, Chancellor Hitler forwarded a message that said "the German people stand shoulder to shoulder with the Italian people."

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FOOTNOTES. Conversations in Moscow between Robert S. Hudson, British Secretary of Overseas Trade, and the Soviet Government, resulted in a statement that negotiations for a new trade agreement would commence in London at a not distant date. . . . Japanese troops smashed their way to Nanchang, in Kiangsi Province, China. . . . The Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, hailed the victory of "Catholic Spain." . . . Pope Pius commenced public audiences. He spoke in English, German and Hungarian. . . . In Belgium, a pastoral letter condemning Nazi racial theories was read in all Catholic churches. . . . The International Congress of American Democracies met in Montevideo, Uruguay. It fights Fascism, does not attack Communism. Kathryn Lewis, daughter of John L. Lewis, was a delegate from the United States. . . . The lower house of the Puerto Rican legislature endorsed the speech of the Senate president, attacking the treatment of Puerto Rico by the United States. . . . Switzerland exiled nine Jesuits who fled from Germany. The Swiss Constitution does not tolerate Jesuits.

CORRESPONDENCE

CADETS

EDITOR: I am grateful for the fine article of tribute by Lieut. Bill Baumer, who in the March 4 issue of AMERICA gives an insight into the religious phase of West Point life.

Bill was one of my squad a few years ago, and I am proud to find him enthusiastically loyal to the fine traditions of the Catholic cadets. I trust that both the clergy and laity may thus be better informed regarding this vitally important military mission field.

In these days when the military groups are gaining ever-increasing ascendancy in governments and international affairs and where radical philosophers are so rampant, it is well for the Church to hold the government services as a religious bulwark of conservative ideas.

West Point, N. Y. (REV.) GEORGE G. MURDOCK

BIBLE

EDITOR: Some time ago a correspondent requested information concerning Catholic editions of the Greek *New Testament*.

In 1933, the Pontifical Biblical Institute, through one of its professors, Father A. Merk, S.J., published an edition of the *New Testament* with the Greek and Latin texts on opposite pages. The book met with so favorable a reception that three editions appeared in five years.

Father Merk prepared the volume primarily for seminarians to supply the place of Nestle and other non-Catholic manuals. His critical apparatus is very complete, listing even the latest papyri findings. But he wished also to provide a book for all Catholic students who desire to read the words of Our Lord and the Apostles in the language in which they were first written.

Weston, Mass.

JOHN J. COLLINS, S.J.

MONEY

EDITOR: Mr. Jarvis starts out with an error, and that error begets further errors. He completely misunderstands what money is. He treats it as wealth. "Money," as Father Coughlin has so often pointed out, "is not wealth, but is a receipt for wealth."

Your correspondent then tells us that the framers of the Constitution intended to do away with paper currency. History will hardly bear out his contention. History tells us that Benjamin Franklin was responsible for putting the disputed clause into the Constitution.

In 1773, Franklin, then our representative in England, was asked to account for the fact that the Colonies were prosperous and England was in a depression. He answered: "That is simple. It is only

because in the Colonies we issue our own money. It is called Colonial scrip, and we issue it in the proper proportion to the demand of trade and industry."

Shortly thereafter England passed a law forbidding the issuing of scrip in the Colonies. Franklin stated that in one year from that date the streets of the Colonies were filled with unemployed, because when England exchanged with the Colonies she gave them only half as many units of payment in borrowed money from the Rothschilds' Bank as they had in scrip.

Later on, Franklin gave this as the reason for the American Revolution. He said: "The Colonies would gladly have borne the little tax on tea and other matters had it not been that England took away from the Colonies their money, thereby creating unemployment and dissatisfaction."

I hope that this letter will help straighten out Mr. Jarvis on the money question. The only way to establish a lasting prosperity is by the use of an honest money system which will be issued in the proper proportion to the demand of trade and industry.

New York, N. Y.

ROBERT A. BOMEISL

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

EDITOR: We felt that you would be interested in the establishment now in progress of a Pro Parvulis Book Club Library in our parish. At present our 1,100 children in the Sunday School are raising funds.

We have numerous books on display until our formal opening sometime in the near future. Our parish organizations have already contributed subscriptions for the three age groups which the Book Club serves—the Sodality for the older girls' books, the Holy Name Society for the boys' group, and the Women's Guild for the younger children.

An association under the patronage of Saint Francis Xavier, which will supervise library activities, has been formed. We hope through our associate membership plan (every adult member of the parish paying a nominal annual fee) to finance adequately our program for the future. Bulletins distributed to the members during the year will contain detailed reports of our efforts.

With 1,000 splendid books graded on the Pro Parvulis plan, together with the above-mentioned boys and girls, we have a wonderful basis upon which to commence this vital form of Catholic Action which, we trust, will affect every parishioner. Story hours will introduce the children to the books. We plan to know who is reading, who should be reading, what they are reading, and what will be most helpful according to their needs.

Arlington, Mass.

Alice R. LEARY

LITERATURE AND ARTS

TO THINK OF TEA, AND DOCTOR JOHNSON!

CORNELIA CRAIGIE

A FOG was on in London one January afternoon, such a fog as you would be glad to boast of for the rest of your life, if you should live to tell the tale! A Number 11 bus was careening madly down the Strand, skirting St. Mary's with an abandon that caused at least one rider in its depths to shut her eyes and fervently expect her angel guardian to do his duty! There were three of us, and we were on our way to a date with Dr. Samuel Johnson, or his ghost in any event, and I can think of little else that would have lured me out on such a day. London bus drivers despise you actively if you make them bring their vehicles to a stop. I have been greeted with many a "Git orf, carn't yer?" as I stood hopefully waiting for a diminution of speed before I took the final leap. This day was no exception.

In such a fog, the world stops at the tip of your nose, and for the nonce, hope seems the greatest of the theological virtues. One by one we skipped blithely into space, remembering from past experience that there ought to be a pavement between us and the antipodes. Yes, there was. A friendly bobby loomed up on our port side, and started us going north on Wine Office Court. "Straight up to the wall, ladies, and Gough Square's on your left." That sounded all right, but hurray! for the man who can go straight when the visibility is zero. Luckily, the narrow Court offered no scope for originality, and we soon found ourselves in the tiny Square, made famous by the house once occupied by one of the most lovable characters in English literature, Samuel Johnson. Since my gentle readers are only vicarious sufferers from the fog, I shall detain them a moment in its mist, as Benny of the Comics used to say, and tell them how we came to be doing anything so fabulously thrilling as going to tea with the ghost of the Great Cham.

Number 17 Gough Square was at that very time (and still is, as far as I know) owned by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth. He must be an exceedingly generous man, for he is willing to share his treasure with the public, and will lend you the house free if you want it for a tea party. In a charming personal note, which I still hoard, he had directed me to the caretaker to

make the necessary arrangements, which I had done some days before. The incumbent then, and perhaps still, was a very charming woman who had been born in no less a place than the Tower of London. To my friendly "How come?" she replied that her mother had been a sort of custodian living in one of the many small buildings within the famous enclosure, a house which had once served Guy Fawkes as a prison. The dynamic energy which got Guy into serious trouble way back in 1605 seems to have continued unabated through the centuries in his restless spirit, which was reputed to walk. One night at a late hour, shortly before the birth of my informant, her mother, seated in her room, heard a sound from the cellar. It was the clanking of a chain. She leaned forward to listen. Unmistakably, a chain was moving below, and worse yet, was approaching the door at the foot of the cellar stairs. With firm determination, the custodian, who did not want to believe in Guy Fawke's ghost, since she still had to keep on living in the house, made her way down the stairs, unlocked the door with a grimness worthy of Boadicea, and threw it back. Two fiery eyes glared at her out of the darkness. With a last flicker of resolution, she held aloft her lantern. Relief surged through the heart of this modern Amazon, for there at her feet stood a goat, dragging his tethering chain, which he had doubtless pulled up from some point on the river bank close by, and then found his way along a subterranean passage to the cellar.

This brave woman's daughter would doubtless have taken in her stride any terrifying haunt that might have gone with 17 Gough Square. But happily, the spirit that pervades it is not a ghost of that sort, but one composed of pleasing, uplifting memories of that unique philosopher whose master mind and charitable heart are still potent enough to add legions to his admirers as he dawns upon each oncoming generation.

Here we were, then, standing in the fog in Gough Square, able barely to descry through the haze the large entrance gate of Number 17. Once inside, however, the inclement elements were forgotten by us in our elation at the beautiful old dwelling, which

had been admirably reconditioned by Mr. Harmsworth at the time he purchased it in 1911. It was now four-thirty, the public had been shut out for the day, and we were in possession. We stood in the entrance hall, wondering at the massive chain hanging across the wide front door, peering, at first shyly, into the large rooms on either side, looking up the ancient stairway which dear old Samuel negotiated nightly when there was no more tea to be drunk and no excuse he could still use to keep himself out of bed.

Our tea was served in the north room on the first floor, which in American means one flight up. Two of our English guests were kept away by the fog, but one, hardier than the others, soon joined the Irish-American trio that had first arrived. Perhaps, as once was suggested, fools walk out where Angles fear to tread. And now began the rite of drinking tea in an apartment which, possibly, and probably, was consecrated to the art by perhaps the greatest tea-drinker of all times. This being a practical age, let me say that the tea cost two and six apiece (60c), and consisted of several kinds of sandwiches, layer cake, *petit fours*, and of course, the cup that cheers. The caretaker had served it and then withdrawn to her own little house adjoining.

As we sat over the teacups, our invisible host continued to preoccupy us. We spoke first of his abnormal fondness for tea, which has recently been described admirably by Agnes Repplier in her entirely satisfying book, the title of which we have cribbed to form the first part of our own.

Dr. Johnson's life is punctuated by tea. Whether we look for him in London or at Streatham, in Boswell's company or in Mrs. Thrale's, we find him drinking it. He began his innocent potations an hour or so before getting up, continued them for a goodly portion of the afternoon, and wound up his nights with as many cups as he could get anyone to make for him.

The talked drifted from tea to the immense charm of Johnson's conversation. What a master mind, what power to express it, must have been his, when Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, Reynolds, and many others, the greatest lights of eighteenth-century England, sat enthralled at his feet. What talk had been heard in this very room!

And what of Johnson and Catholicism? Someone volunteered: "Get down the *Life* from the shelf there, and find that bit where Boswell, who wanted to start something, made the standard attacks on the Church."

Here it was, with Johnson speaking: "Sir, there is no idolatry in the Mass. They believe God to be there, and they adore him." "Sir, they do not worship saints. They invoke them." "Confession?" said Boswell. "Why, I don't know but what it is a good thing."

In rebuttal it was offered that Boswell attributed Johnson's championship to his love of opposition, and someone else cited the Doctor's categoric dictum: "In everything in which they differ from us, they are wrong!"

Nevertheless I am of the opinion, and said so, that Johnson had a real sense of the Church's claims. Boswell tells elsewhere, and without quali-

fying statement, that his idol "had a respect for the old religion," and what is one to think of the curious utterance regarding Catholicism to which he once gave voice? I once more drew Boswell towards me, and opened it: "There is one side on which I might be persuaded to embrace it. A good man of a timorous disposition, in great doubt of his acceptance with God, and pretty credulous, may be glad to be of a church where there are so many helps to get to Heaven. I would be a papist if I could. I have fear enough, but an obstinate rationality prevents me. I shall never be a papist, unless on the near approach of death."

Be all this as it may, religion was the dominant influence in the life of this great man. He was enormously and imprudently charitable, giving away untold sums even when his own income was scanty, to keep people from want. Two old ladies without means, Madame Desmoulin and Mrs. Williams, lived for years at his expense, and he could refuse few requests for help when matters were urgent. He had a strong fear of death, and one of his most appealing utterances concerned it. On being asked how he would conduct himself at the last moment, he replied: "I know not whether I should wish to have a friend by me, or have it all between God and myself."

Johnson lived in this house for eleven years, 1748-1759. The *Rambler* was written here (1749-52), and in all probability, the famous letter to Lord Chesterfield. Here it was, also, that the Dictionary was compiled. Eyre and Spottiswoode, the publishers, were near by, and still occupy quarters only a few blocks away. The attic, where the work was done, has been restored by Mr. Harmsworth to its original form—one large room extending across the whole front of the house. We wandered around it, looking at the different editions of the Dictionary. We hunted up some of the well-known definitions, of which perhaps the most famous is that fine old chestnut: "Oats, a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

At last we decided reluctantly to go home, and filed slowly down the three flights of stairs to the entrance hall. As we passed through the south drawing-room to the small door now used by the public, we stopped to look at Ward's painting of Johnson reading the manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Once more this incomparable friend had stepped in and saved a crony from eviction, for the manuscript was sent out and sold, and Goldy's landlady, standing by in incredulity and simulated patience, was for the moment satisfied.

Dear old Samuel Johnson! How some of us may envy your deep love of God, your charity to your fellow-man, the humility and contrition in the beautiful prayers you have left behind, the truly Catholic spirit that made you refuse an opiate in your last painful hours "that you might render up your soul to God unclouded!" Surely you belonged then to the Soul of the Church! And remembering how much you loved always to come out on top in an argument, what a joy to think of you now as a victorious member of the Church Triumphant!

CRIEF

Remember this, when at your heart
Sorrow comes thieving:
Our Lady was exempt from sin,
But not from grieving;
It was our evil web she paid for,
None of her weaving.

Her pain was like her innocence,
No finite thing.
When God grieves, even the sunlight cowers
And day takes wing,
And there is mourning in the song
The new stars sing.

Remember her, O querulous heart,
When thieving sorrow
Comes plucking at your peace
Today, tomorrow.
Our Lady paid good usury
For all we borrow.

WILLIAM THOMAS WALSH

INFANT OF PRAGUE

Within a little house of glass
Our baby King we throne;
No wonder when the Child grew up
He would not throw a stone!

SISTER MARY IGNATIUS

TWO WORDS

God spoke,
And from His strong, majestic word
Reechoed thunder,
As it beat and broke
Against the rafters of the world.
Shattered into stars
It told celestial splendor,
And left night's silver glory
All unfurled.

In one small fleck of silence
Between the pulse-beats of my mother's heart,
God breathed a word
Tender . . . tranquil . . . beautiful . . . profound;
It was my soul
Wrought with perfect art:
Made deep and free
For love
And strong for pain,
And wide enough to compass-round
Divinity.

JOHN J. WALSH.

ROSARY LANE

(*Novitiate of St. Andrew-on-Hudson*)

There is a humming as of bees
Where novices who stroll in threes
Are necklaced with their rosaries.

Head bowed, each walks, intent, sedate,
As if he had been sent of late
To tell Our Lady her estate—

Like Gabriel in human guise,
As if he pondered the surprise
That clouded, lit Our Lady's eyes.

Voices that coast upon the breeze
Of novices who pray, like bees
That hum and hover, scent and seize!

ALFRED BARRETT

THE OPPRESSOR

Love makes one weak,
Is hard upon the heart,
Merciless on the meek,
If once you let it start;
A pressure is, a pain,
A burning in the brain,
From which one would not part;
And though of one's own choosing,
And none of one's refusing,
Undoes one day and night,
Is fervor half, half fright,
Is neither wrong, nor right,
Nor bloom, nor blight,
In sum:
A dull delirium,
And wild delight!

LEONARD FEENEY

THE EXPECTATION OF MARY

The candle keeps a trim flame
In a pleasant hut
Of windowed lantern shut:
Jesus in Mary the same.

Oh, what a safe redoubt
And shelter from the night,—
Lest damp devour that light,
Or wind blow it out!

And see, what walls confine
That irrepressible beam
Are all themselves a-gleam
Themselves are all a-shine!

PATRICK MARY PLUNKETT

BOOKS

OUTMODED DIALECTIC UNTRUSTWORTHY GUIDE

EUROPE ON THE EVE. By Frederick L. Schuman. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. \$3.50

IT is the opinion of Dr. Schuman, Woodrow Wilson Professor of Government at Williams College, that the major European decisions of the past six years have exhibited a callous indifference to moral considerations. Brutal aggression was, in every instance, handsomely rewarded. Moreover, amateur Machiavellians brought back from Munich not "peace with honor," but dishonor without peace. Dr. Schuman's explanation of all this immoral and stupid bungling is simplicity itself—Tory fear of Communism. Let us have a look at his thesis.

British Tories were obsessed by a great fear—social revolution from below which would seek to abolish nobilities, plutocracies and priesthoods. They, therefore, viewed with alarm all Communistic propensities on the part of the lower social orders to limit or assail the privileges of their superiors. They viewed with approval all devices which would promote order, hierarchy and discipline. British Tories were not menaced by domestic proletarian unrest; but the Empire was potentially menaced by Bolshevism. When regimes came to power in Rome, Tokio and Berlin sworn to defend "civilization" against "Bolshevism," it became obvious to the Tories that the Fascist powers must be permitted, even encouraged, to grow strong so as to be capable of liquidating the USSR and the Comintern.

First of all, Russia must be isolated. The ties between France and her Eastern allies must be broken. France must be immobilized, for any French involvement in the clash to come would, for geographical reasons, entail British involvement—which was precisely what was to be avoided. The immobilization of France required the strengthening of Germany and Italy to a point at which Paris could not challenge them. Hence remilitarization of the Rhineland, the conquest of Ethiopia, the Fascist victory in Spain—all were useful devices to supplement British efforts to keep France neutral. A neutralized France must be induced to grant Hitler *carte blanche* in Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and the Balkans. By the same logic Japan must be permitted to impose its will on China. Hence, all efforts from Geneva, Paris or Washington to thwart the march of the anti-Comintern crusaders must be sabotaged. In the end the Fascist powers must attack Russia. The Western powers must remain neutral. The Tories and the Empire would thereby be saved, for Communism could not defeat such a combination of foes. It would either be driven back to the Urals or would, by desperate resistance, exhaust itself and its enemies alike to the advantage of England.

This alleged Tory program involves three serious risks. The Fascist powers may come to terms with Moscow and attack the West. Secondly, they may attack Russia. If they win, they will then dismember the British and French empires. Should they lose, the floodgates of World Revolution will be opened. As a final possibility, the Fascist powers may utilize their present power not to attack Russia but to wrest concessions from London and Paris.

Dr. Schuman interprets the recent crises of European diplomacy in terms of a gigantic conspiracy among the classes to support Fascism because reactionary plutocrats feared the people as a Great Beast. This reviewer does not accept the Marxist philosophy of history. He does not therefore believe that Dr. Schuman, who employs this outmoded dialectic, is a trustworthy guide to the period under consideration. JOHN J. O'CONNOR

NOBLE VENTURE HAUNTED BY MEMORIES

PARADISE PLANTERS. By Katherine Burton. Longmans, Green and Co. \$2.50

THE sub-title calls this delicious book the Story of Brook Farm, and what a beautiful, heroic, idealistic, lonesome story it is! Miss Burton brings a sympathy to its telling that sends her heart sliding down her pen and onto her pages so compellingly that even the most disinterested will feel some vague nostalgia for a Utopia that almost was, and seemingly never will be so near again. Her narrative is history, but she has woven her characters and situations so unerringly into a picture pattern, that it reads like romance and is perfectly convincing.

There are those who claim that Brook Farm lived the honesty that literary Concord feared. Certainly the Brook Farmers, under the inspiring leadership of George and Sophia Ripley, dared to try an enormous thing. They had recoiled from the pessimistic code of Calvinism, but they were too real to be satisfied with the substituted Unitarian froth that was offered so easily around Boston and Harvard a hundred years ago. They liked Emerson personally, but they could read his dilettantism perhaps more sanely than he could himself, and they knew him for a *poseur*, more caught by love of phrase than by his transcendental philosophy. They admired Margaret Fuller and her "conversations," but they got rightly sick of talk and criticism and smartness—so they moved away from it, nine miles away from it to a farm in West Roxbury, abandoning their pulpits and their half truths, and turning their pens into ploughshares. They worked, they ran a school, they published a paper, they debated, they scrimped, they suffered and they loved it.

Their critics charged them with Communism. If they were communistic, they were surely modeled on the first Christians with a fire of eagerness to renew the face of the earth and to better the muddled and unfair industrial system that was victimizing their generation. Much more truly they had launched a cooperative and maintained in all their struggle with the soil, with fire, with need and hardship, the grandest regard for the individual. Of this, their subsequent careers are proof more than sufficient. The tragedy is that their adventure failed. They could not make it pay and they were literally betrayed from their singleness of purpose into a strange and strained system of common effort imported from abroad and sponsored by a charlatan. Their surrender to Fourier, under financial pressure, was their complete undoing. Miss Burton quotes Hawthorne in the sentiment that the original Brook Farmers all shared: "I feel that even though I went away, the clay of which my body is molded is nearer akin to these crumbling furrows than to any other portion of the earth's dust." They had ventured nobly and they lived out rich lives, thrilled and haunted by memories. R. J. McINNIS

VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORY AND LETTERS

THE JACOBEAN AGE. By David Mathew. Longmans, Green and Co. \$5

RECENTLY appointed assistant to the Archbishop of Westminster, David Mathew tackled an intricate problem when he chose as subject for his latest historical work, the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the Jaco-

bean Age, with its reverence for abstractions like sovereignty, landed possessions and patriotism, with its King James I, its favorites Cecil and Buckingham, and its strong undercurrent of religious bickering between Anglicans, Puritans and Catholics. But by careful research into state papers, private correspondence and unpublished manuscripts, particularly the Hatfield House Manuscripts, he has brought off the feat with precision and finesse.

His particular *genre* of historical writing unfolds the events of a period by unfolding the characters of the men who made that period. In this book he focuses his attention on the two Kings, James I and Charles I, and on the Earl of Salisbury and the Duke of Buckingham. After a careful character study that descends to such *minutiae* as their preferences in food, drink, clothes and architecture, he describes their rise in the political and social life of the kingdom, and finally estimates their influence on the entire period. The result is authentic, well documented history.

The picture of the Catholic minority drawn from the same private sources, and from the books they read and the ballads they sang, shows a strong inner circle of nobles and wealthy gentry with an uncertain fringe of commoners constantly dissolving and reappearing. The half tolerance shown them by the Crown, the recusancy laws and fines seldom enforced made their lives one of uneasy contentment.

The book will not be read widely for Dr. Mathew is no popularizer. The involved style demands careful study, and the content presupposes a certain knowledge of the period. It may seem ungrateful to find fault with so monumental a work, and even unfair to criticize it for not accomplishing what neither author nor publisher intended, but one cannot help sighing over the lost opportunity of so scholarly and Catholic an historian in missing that vast field of educated Catholic laymen who would welcome a reliable, readable account of this period.

But the book should prove indispensable not only to students of that particular age in English history and literature, but also to students of early American history in the English colonies. For it is a detailed study of that land and those intolerances from which the early settlers fled to find prosperity, material and spiritual, on this side of the world. Perhaps the highest compliment that can be accorded the book is to hope that Dr. Mathew's forthcoming *Early Carolines* in which "the actual setting of the voyages to Maryland, and the English background to the New England States will be considered," measures up to the stature of its elder brother, *The Jacobean Age*.

PAUL L. O'CONNOR

BOOKS IN BRIEFER REVIEW

FROM UNION SQUARE TO ROME. By Dorothy Day. *Preservation of the Faith Press*. \$1.50

THIS book is not an autobiography, but it might be called an apologia. It is the story of Dorothy Day's soul-struggle with Grace, and ends with her conversion to Catholicism. It says nothing of her life during the days of her real work. Whether the reader is in accord with her work or not, he cannot but be impressed by the road traveled to God.

The author addresses the book to her brother, a Communist, and writes it for all who ask: "How could you become a Catholic?" In style it does not rank with *Arches of the Years, Now I See*, or other like books. There are too many interstices to call it complete.

A product of Chicago public schools, Dorothy Day was baptized in the Episcopalian Church at the age of twelve and was a rejector of all religion at the age of sixteen when she entered the University of Illinois. Moving to New York at eighteen, she worked on radical

papers and reported for daily papers in New York and other cities. She was a Socialist before the Russian Revolution, a member of the I. W. W. and of many affiliate Communist organizations, though at no time formally a Communist. Her associates, while she was reporting, attending meetings and assisting at strikes, included Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, Robert Minor and Hugo Gellert.

Reared in an agnostic family, married to a Communist, and associated with radicals, Dorothy Day traveled the road to Catholicism in pain and loneliness. Early and lastingly impressed by the first Catholic family she met ("I found a glimpse of supernatural beauty in Mrs. Barrett"), a constant reader of the *Imitation of Christ* and of the New Testament, she found the climax of her yearning for God when her child, Teresa, was born. Aided by a Sister of Charity in a slight material way, instructed in the Catholic religion and encouraged in her trials, Dorothy Day was received into the Catholic Church six months after her child was baptized. This acceptance of Grace meant the loss of family life, for her husband would have nothing to do with her Faith or herself.

FRANCIS B. McMANUS

A LAYMAN'S CHRISTIAN YEAR. By Ernest Oldmeadow. *Spiritual Book Associates*. \$3

THIS is a collection of essays on the whole Liturgical Year, contributed to the London *Tablet* during Mr. Oldmeadow's eleven years of editorship. The late Abbot Vonier in his Foreword says: ". . . for all Catholics the glories of the Liturgy ought to be their natural *milieu*; they ought to act it, they ought to sing it, they ought to expound it and, not least, they ought to write about it . . ." And of Mr. Oldmeadow the same Abbot of Buckfast concludes: ". . . he shows to us the beauties of our common spiritual home, in which we all rejoice . . . for liturgy is above all things the hilarity of the simple children of God." The book is the February choice of the Spiritual Book Associates.

DANIEL M. O'CONNELL

THE STORY OF ROSABELLE SHAW. By D. E. Stevenson. *Farrar and Rinehart*. \$2

A COUSIN of Robert Louis Stevenson, D. E. Stevenson is the author of some half-dozen novels. The scene of her latest story is a farm in Scotland during a period of some twenty years prior to and including the World War. The earlier chapters of the book unfold the story of John Shaw and his wife, Fanny, and their growing young family. An unforeseen addition to the latter is made when, during a shipwreck on the rocky shore of the Shaw farm, John rescues an unknown baby, the only survivor of the disaster. All efforts at identification failing, the Shaws adopt the child, calling him Jay, and as the years pass Fanny grows to love him more even than her own children, including her first-born, Rosabelle. With the coming of maturity Rosabelle herself becomes strangely attracted to the mysterious Jay, despite warnings from several quarters. The story is climaxed with revelations concerning Jay and with the return from the war of his rival, young Tom Gilmour.

There is not a great deal to the tale and for the most part of its development it is too leisurely and lacking interesting action. But there is a certain charm in the simplicity and sincerity with which the story is told. Miss Stevenson presents a likable group of characters, even though they tend to run to types. Her emotional values are sounder than Americans are wont to expect in British fiction, and she is mistress of a quiet and homely type of humor which lends distinction even to pages otherwise uninteresting.

R. PAUL SULLIVAN

INDUSTRIAL VALLEY. By Ruth McKenney. *Harcourt, Brace and Co.* \$3

AKRON is the valley, the industry is rubber; the villains of this epic are the rubber barons and their minions; and its hero is the worker. The story begins with a sad scene of eviction in 1932, and ends with the glad tidings of a labor victory won in 1936. Akron is a by-product

of the World War. Something had to be done to step up production, and quickly. Skilful advertising soon started a mighty trek from the southern mountains; and today, the population of Akron is almost sixty-five per cent old American. With seventy-five per cent of her population under forty, and eighty-five per cent under fifty, youth rules in Akron.

After the boom came the depression and in its wake, hunger for the unemployed; and for those kept on in the factories, wage cuts and the inhuman speed-up. The answer of the workers was organization. As the author tells the story, first William Green and his A. F. of L. were tried and found wanting. Then, just before a great crucial strike when a leader was badly needed, the rubber workers called on John L. Lewis, and his coming was the coming of a hero. Incidentally, at Akron occurred the first sitdown strike, suggested to the employees of the Firestone plant by one Alex Eigenmacht who had fought in the Hungarian Red Army of Bela Kun.

Ruth McKenney can write. Her narrative flows in a fast moving parallelism of short sentences that send the eye hurrying down the page. Her constant appeal is to the senses and the emotions. She lays no heavy burden upon the intelligence. No subtle issue challenges the reader. With a keen eye for the dramatic, she often introduces dialog which, unfortunately, she punctuates with vulgarity, obscenity and profanity. Now this may be realistic and racy, or daring and collegiate; but it is unkind to the hill folk and even falls below the standard of decency set up for radio and film. The author has a highly developed gift of implying more than she says. One infers that she likes some Communists, hates all Fascism and knows nothing of the Spanish situation.

GEORGE T. EBERLE

GODS OF THE GENTILES. George C. Ring, S.J. *The Bruce Publishing Co.* \$3.50

FATHER RING has written an extraordinary book concerning the religions of races famous in history before and about the time of Our Lord. In a clear and simple narrative form, we read of the religious practices of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The importance of some knowledge on the part of Catholics concerning the history of religions may be briefly indicated by stating that a prevailing school of thought in Europe, and to a lesser extent in America, has for several decades been attempting to account by natural processes for the rise of Christianity from the religions of the ancient East or of the Mediterranean peoples. The majority of writers of this school assume as a hypothesis, and yet treat as a certain postulate, a form of evolution which is applied to the spirit and to the religious instinct of man. In shallower writers "proofs" are founded on the so-called similarities between pagan practices and Christian customs.

These arguments, founded on analogy, violate every rule which logic dictates concerning the argument from analogy. More cautious and more scientific writers, such as Cumont in France, admit in principle that the argument from similarity does not conclude to an assertion of the dependence of Christianity on paganism; further he and other cautious scholars admit that the evolutionary thesis is not proved. And yet, scholar as he is, Cumont, within the last decade, has announced that perennial hope of the naturalistic evolutionist in these words: "In the measure that the religious history of the Empire is studied, the triumph of the Church will appear more clearly, I think, as the end-product of a long evolution of beliefs." Thus, Cumont in his work on the *Oriental Religions in the Roman World*. The reader of Father Ring's book will understand how futile a task it is thus to attempt to derive supernatural Christianity from the vagaries of the gentile religions.

On many counts Father Ring's book is a valuable addition to the Catholic book-shelf. The reviewer regrets the omission of some account of the religions of Asia Minor. In the matter of style, the occasional humorsome form of writing was found distracting. By every test the book is thoroughly worthy.

WM. J. McGARRY

THEATRE

THE PRIMROSE PATH. For many months we have had on the stage of the Biltmore Theatre a play which, in my opinion, should not have been allowed to remain on any stage after its first performance. Even our tolerant press critics had no good words for the play when they had praised the acting.

The play is called *The Primrose Path*. It is "written" by Robert Buckner and Walter Hart, the plot being taken from a recent novel for which no discredit is given on the program. It is produced by George Abbott, and it is triumphantly established as one of the season's theatrical successes. Up till now I have ignored it, hoping it would pass away leaving nothing but its unpleasant odor behind it. But I have just been severely arraigned over the telephone by a Tarrytown reader of *AMERICA*, who took his family to see it under the apparent impression, gained from its title, that it was a pastoral offering set in flowering countrysides. Despite this error, my critic was an intelligent man, who made his points in a few brisk and carefully chosen words.

He and his family, he explained, had for years based their theatre-going on my *AMERICA* reviews. They went to plays I praised. They remained away from those I condemned. But, unfortunately, in the case of *The Primrose Path*, they had assumed that a play I had ignored was accepted by me and was merely waiting its time for review.

When I explained that I had ignored it because many of our readers, especially the Sisters in our convent schools, objected to detailed discussions of immoral plays, as all their students read my reviews, my telephone critic's pleasant baritone took on a sharper edge.

The Sisters, he reminded me, were not theatre-goers, nor were many of their young pupils. A very important part of my duty, he added, was to protect *AMERICA*'s theatre-going families from blundering into improper plays, against which I should have warned them. And as *AMERICA*'s readers are all of high intelligence I should not attempt a mere blanket condemnation, but instead should frankly set forth the play's objectionable features.

I liked that man and his willingness to accept good-humoredly the few points I hurriedly stuck into him during our brief discussion. I still maintain that his stand is debatable; but he had such a nice voice and personality that I ended by promising to impale *The Primrose Path* on the point of this hard-working pen and to hold up its plot for *AMERICA*'s readers. So here it is, in a paragraph.

The Primrose Path is a comedy about a family of prostitutes. The grandmother of the family, now retired and living on her unsavory memories, and her daughter, is the most abominable old reprobate the stage has shown us for many seasons. Her present preoccupation is the preparation of her young granddaughter, about ten, for the life she herself has lived. The grandmother's daughter, mother of the child, is now living that life and supporting her family by doing it, assisted by a young daughter who adds to the family income by shop-lifting. The girl's brother is also in training for that light-fingered career.

In justice to the American public, which has accepted this play with enthusiasm, it must be added that the authors assure it that all these unfortunates, housed in a tumbled-down shanty near railroad tracks, have "hearts of gold." They are utterly immoral but they love one another. They have a sense of humor. They live together in amity. They are even capable, as in the case of the grandmother, of personal sacrifice for one another. The sole member of the family who tries to be decent is pictured as plain, repellent and lacking in every quality of "allure."

ELIZABETH JORDAN

FILMS

THE MIKADO. When the Gilbert and Sullivan operas burst upon the blinking eyes of the later Victorians, with all the bright shock of the Savoy Theatre's revolutionary electric lighting plant, they opened up new comic horizons for a sentimental, moribund stage. And now, for the first time, many film fans will look upon Gilbertian antics and listen to the musical fluency of Sullivan in this filming of the most delightful and melodious opera of them all. It also arrives in good time to antidote the plethora of "swing versions" which have reduced the high flush of the Savoyard tradition to blackface. The stylized settings and costumes are brought out by an effective use of color, and Victor Schertzinger has almost reverently adhered to tradition in his treatment of the music and comedy business. Kenny Baker represents Hollywood in an otherwise English cast recruited largely from the D'Oyly Carte Company, playing Nanki-Poo, the Emperor's son who finds romance with Yum-Yum and all but disaster on the little list of Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner. In the last rôle, Martyn Green gives a broad and excellently mannered reading of his low comedy part and Jean Colin, Sydney Granville and Constance Willis manage music and whimsical lyrics with veteran ease. This is a collector's item for enthusiasts and fresh novelty for everyone else. (*Universal*)

THE STORY OF VERNON AND IRENE CASTLE. This is a memoir of slightly pre-War America which is rich in nostalgic charm and a graceful contrast to the contemporary hurly-burly onstage and off. It is unfolded as a background for the Vernon Castles who were the reigning terpsichoreans back in the days when dancing was an art and not an acrobatic feat. Skilful direction has toned down the musical fripperies so that the human drama keeps its share of the interest, and the plot carries the famous dancers through their rise to the height of the entertainment world, their domestic life and the grim finale of the Great War. It is a personal tale and built up from the elements of real life, pathos and casual comedy. Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire play the title rôles with sympathetic feeling and they are equal to the series of dance styles which pass in review during the film. Edna May Oliver and that fine character actor, Walter Brennan, account for humorous portraits. The production is recommended for two generations as unusual fare. (*RKO*)

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. Conan Doyle's rather pathetic interest in the occult crops up here and there in this gripping melodrama and is given a suitable and wholly natural answer by his own creation, the deductive Sherlock Holmes. Like a pattern from the author's life, the murder on the bleak Devonshire moors appears like preternatural malice wrought on an innocent heir until the reasonable inquiry conducted by Holmes and his blundering aide, Dr. Watson, discloses the human trickery which underlies it. Taking it on its face value, it is a fine evocation of horror. Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Richard Green and Wendy Barrie lend authentic English accents to a picture calculated to chill adult patrons of vicarious terror. (*Twentieth Century-Fox*)

THE FLYING IRISHMAN. The story of Douglas Corrigan's wrong-way flight to fame has been brought to the screen in a compromise technique, and a regulation plot has been adorned with the factual, off-stage narration of the boy wonder's exploit. Mr. Corrigan is himself in a news-clip style and Paul Kelly, Eddie Quillan and Robert Armstrong carry the fictitious part very well. This will do for a family novelty. (*RKO*)

THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS

EVENTS

THE confusion caused by diverse legislation in different States was again pushed into the spotlight by a battle in the New York Senate. The idea that every dog should be allowed one bite before his owner is liable for damages was opposed unanimously by letter-carriers all over the State. The mailmen promoted a bill whereby canines would not be permitted even one nip. Opposing this bill, a Senator declared: "It is a principle of common law that has come down to us from ancient times that every dog is entitled to one bite." Impressed by this argumentation, the Senate defeated the bill so that New York State dogs will not be deprived of their right to bite any human being once, and mailmen will be forced to have their legs chewed twice before they can collect damages. . . . The incident raised a clamor for more harmony in the laws of States. . . . Some States allow no bites, others one bite, others two bites. . . . A citizen traveling through the country is placed in an awkward position. When a dog is about to gnaw his leg, he has no time to look up the law in that particular State. He does not know whether the canine has a right to bite him several times or not at all. Put in this quandary, most citizens try to drive the dog away, which action may involve an invasion of the canine's legal right. Since most people want to be kind to animals and would not knowingly deprive a dog of any pleasure to which it has a right, it is now proposed that all States pass legislation permitting respectable dogs the pleasure of biting law-abiding citizens once, and penalizing lawless people who run or fight when they feel a canine snapping at their legs. . . .

Decisions in widely separated courts also emphasized the tremendous diversity in State laws. . . . As recent trials indicated, some States grant a husband divorce if the wife frequently places cats in his bed; others do not recognize this habit as legal cause. . . . There are States which give the husband divorce if his wife likes to throw bricks through the dining room window while he is eating breakfast; other States while frowning on this form of exercise refuse to smash a marriage because of smashed chinaware. . . . If a wife continually nags a husband because he does the housework carelessly, she should look up the law of her State, if she does not want to be divorced. Either that, or do the housework herself. . . . Some States grant a wife divorce if the husband enjoys correcting her pronunciation when other people are listening. . . . Certain States will give divorce if the husband demonstrates his marksmanship by shooting the heels off his wife's shoes while she has them on. . . .

Many years ago, when divorce began, wise men predicted that once marriage could be broken for grave cause the time would soon arrive when it would be broken for trivial cause or no cause at all. Their prediction has come true. . . . The national uniformity the U. S. A. needs is legislation by every State absolutely forbidding divorce and remarriage. One of the chief reasons why the U. S. A. leads the world in crime is because she leads the world in divorce. . . . Christ did not say: "If a wife throws bricks, let the husband divorce her and remarry." He did not say: "If a husband corrects his wife's pronunciation or complains about her cooking, let her divorce him and get another husband." He said: "Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." No man, no judge, no legislature. . . . It is appalling to think that every State in the Union, except South Carolina, has divorce legislation that defies Christ. The United States was a happier nation when it believed in the Son of God.

THE PARADER

